PPMC MAGAZINE

SOUTH AFRICA

PHOTOGRAPHY, PAGEANTRY, MODELING AND COMPETITIONS

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Bejandri Lourens

Annica Potgieter

YARNH

Cover Model

Chanel Rautenbach

Miss Global South Africa 2025/26

Issue 165

Featuring **National & International** *Models*

Angelique Govender

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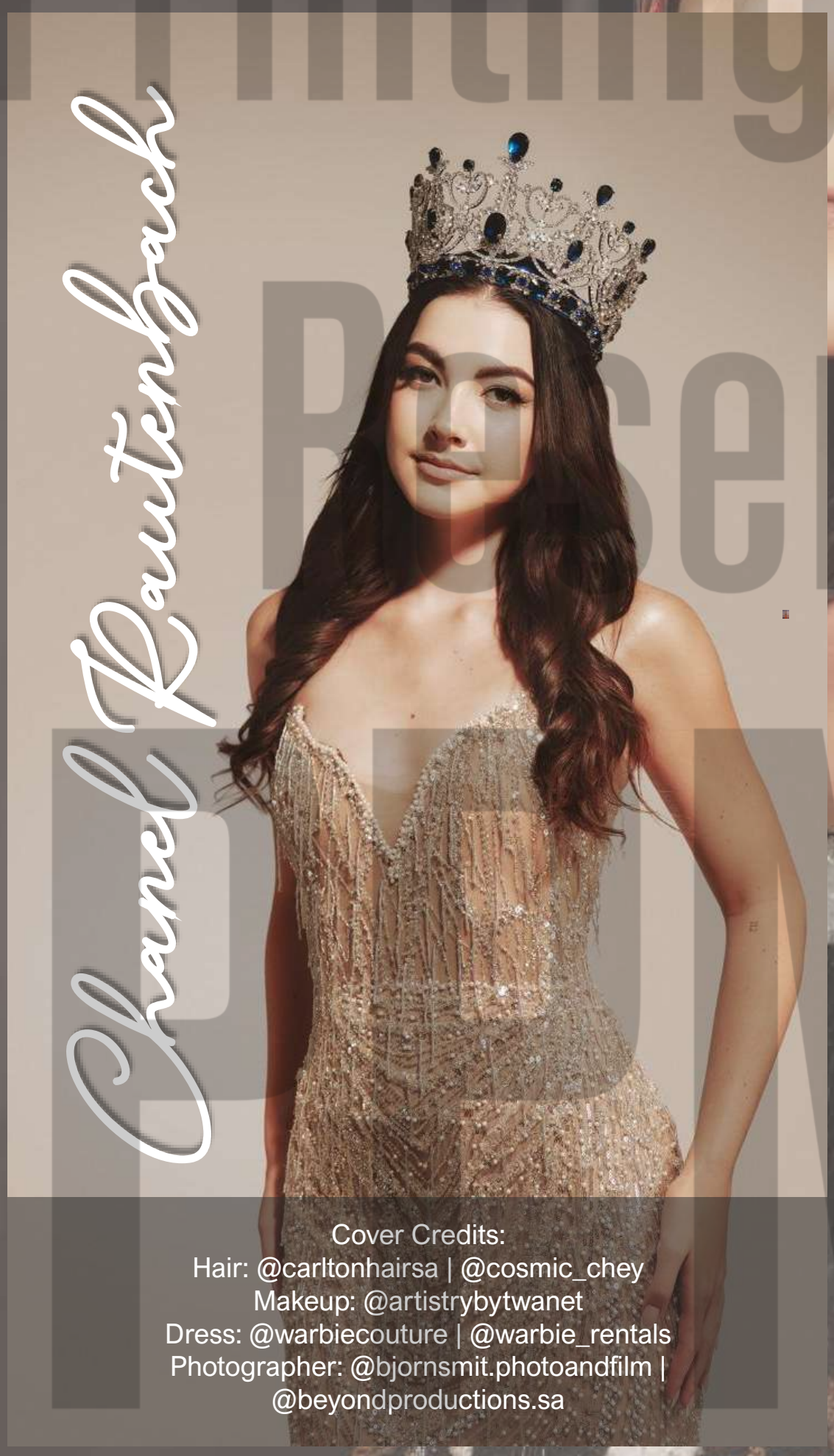

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PPMC MAGAZINE
PHOTOGRAPHY, PAGEANTRY, MODELING AND COMPETITIONS

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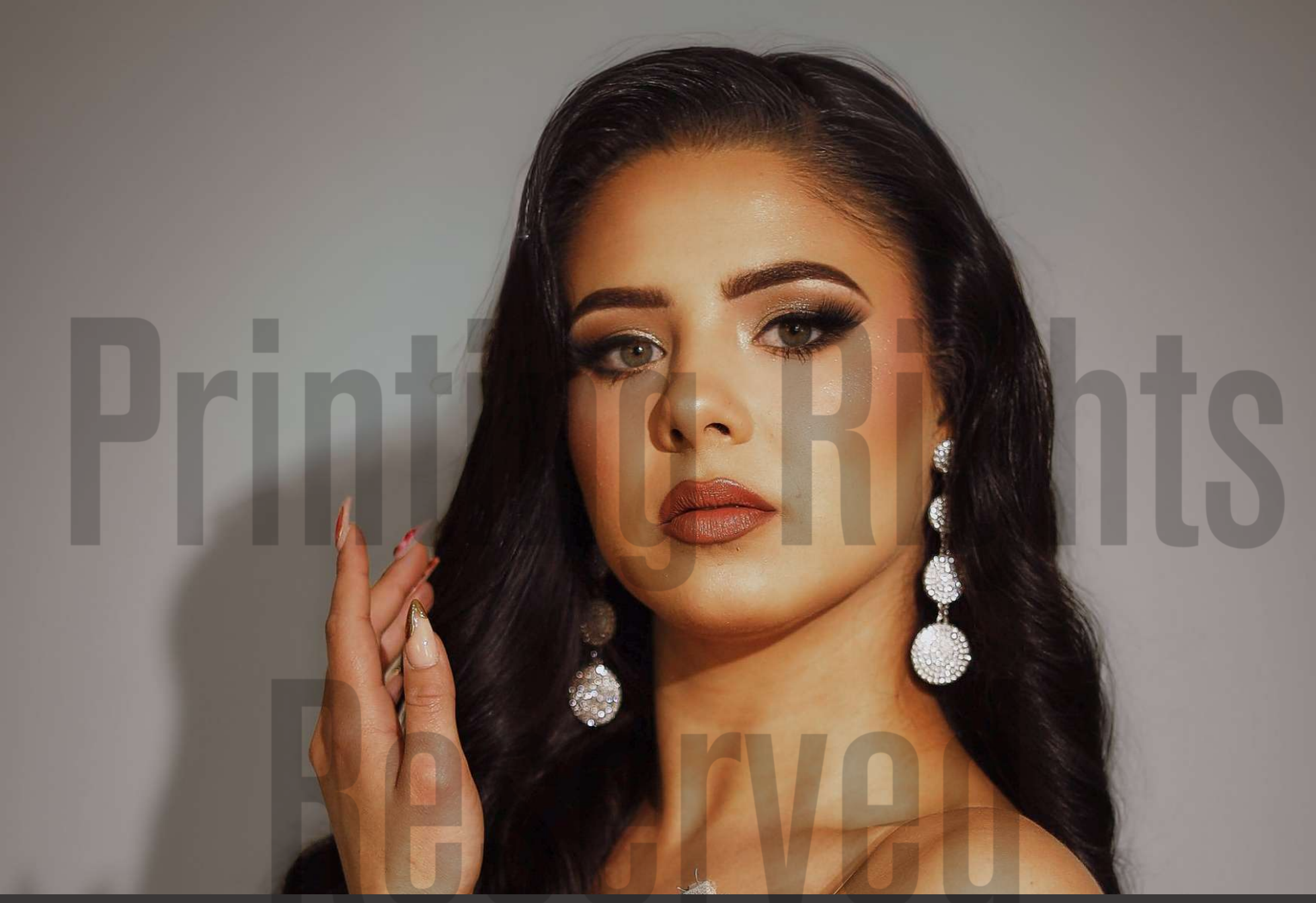


#Inspire

Interview with Bejandri Lourens

Continental Queen of Africa 2025

A story by:
Etienne Vermaak

Bejandri Lourens still lights up when she talks about her time at Miss Asia Pacific International 2025. "Miss Asia Pacific International 2025 has honestly been one of the most incredible experiences of my life," she says. Crowned Continental Queen of Africa 2025 at the event in Cebu City, Philippines, Bejandri calls the title "such an honor, one I'll treasure forever." She adds,

"I may not have won the MAPI crown, but this crown means just as much to me. It represents every dream I've chased, every challenge I've faced, and every lesson I've learned along the way."

Bejandri's path into pageantry started young. She was drawn to the confidence, discipline, and sense of purpose that competitions build. "What inspired me most was the opportunity to grow into the best version of myself while using my voice to uplift and inspire others," she explains. Over time, pageantry turned into more than a contest for her. "It became a calling and a platform to make a meaningful difference." The journey was not always smooth.

At 14, Bejandri stepped away from pageants because of mental health struggles. "It felt like a major setback," she recalls, "but it ultimately became a period of deep growth and healing." She leaned on faith, support from family and friends, and a renewed sense of purpose to come back stronger. "I was able to return more grounded and more determined than ever before."

Now, as a title holder, Bejandri sees clear duties ahead. "Being a title holder carries the responsibility of being a role model, serving the community, and representing your title with grace, integrity, and professionalism," she says. She balances it all with good time management, clear priorities, and a strong support network. "Staying rooted in my faith and purpose helps me remain balanced and intentional in everything I do."

Pageantry has changed how Bejandri sees herself. "It has played a significant role in shaping my confidence, sense of identity," she notes. The experience taught her discipline, self-belief, and how to stay authentic.

"True confidence comes from purpose, growth, and the courage to keep moving forward despite challenges."

One memory stands out from her time competing overseas. During a visit to a local school, the children made a deep impression. Each class had been assigned a country, and the students who represented hers welcomed her with real warmth and excitement. "The connection we shared went far beyond language or culture," Bejandri says. "I am grateful that I am still in contact with them today."

Moments like that show her what pageantry is really about: "connection, impact, and representing something greater than yourself."

Bejandri wants her role to create real change. "My greatest hope is to leave a meaningful and lasting legacy by empowering young people, especially young women, to believe in their worth, embrace their confidence, and pursue their dreams with courage and faith," she says. She focuses on building spaces where youth feel seen and supported, a commitment she plans to keep long after any title ends.

Preparation for a pageant goes deep. It covers runway work, public speaking, fitness, styling, personal growth, and mental readiness. Bejandri credits her mentors, coaches, family, and her own work as a model coach for getting her ready. "I have been incredibly blessed with supportive people," she says.

For Bejandri, beauty means more than looks. "Beauty is reflected in confidence, kindness, authenticity, and purpose," she explains. She believes modern pageants shift focus to leadership, intelligence, and impact. "Pageants are helping redefine beauty by showing that true beauty comes from who you are and how you serve others."

She offers straightforward advice to young people thinking about pageants. "Believe in yourself wholeheartedly and remain consistent in your growth," Bejandri says. "Do not chase perfection, rather, focus on purpose, character, and becoming the best version of yourself. Pageantry should be a journey of self-development, confidence, and meaningful impact." Criticism and stereotypes about pageants do not shake her. "I remind myself to stay focused on my purpose and the positive difference I am working to make," she says. By leading with integrity and kindness, she hopes to change views and show pageantry's value as a space for leadership and service.

Through her platform, Bejandri pushes confidence, purpose, and growth for young people. She supports community work and outreach to uplift others and open doors. "My goal is always to inspire and create opportunities for others to believe in their potential," she adds.

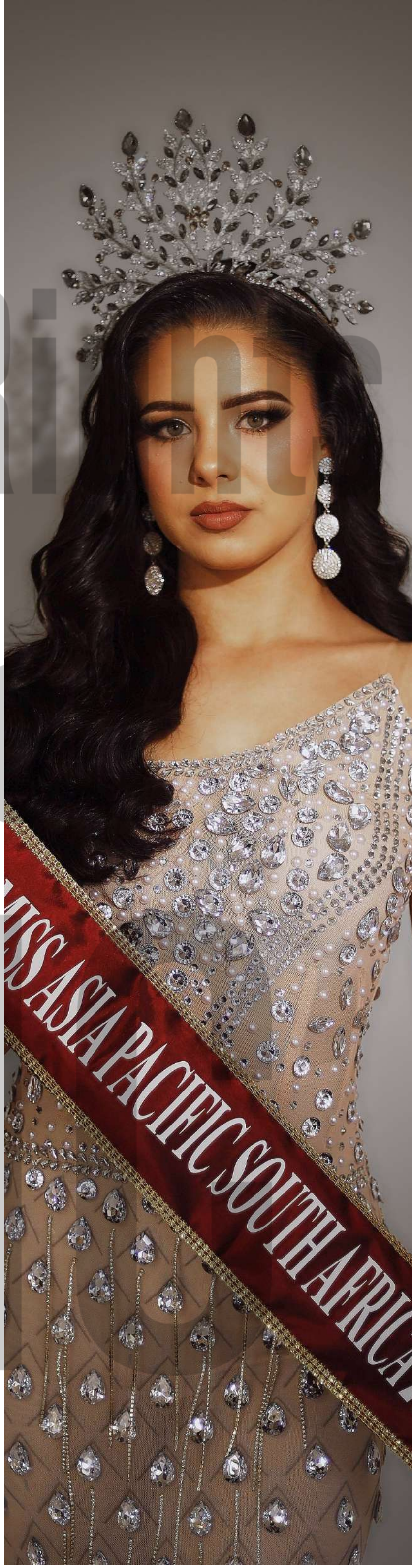
Many people think pageants are only about appearance. Bejandri wants to correct that. "In reality, they require discipline, intelligence, leadership, compassion, and a strong commitment to service," she says. "Pageantry is truly about personal development and making a meaningful contribution to society."

Behind the stage lights, she points out the real work: early mornings, long rehearsals, emotional growth, and deep friendships. "Some of the most life-changing experiences happen away from the spotlight, where friendships are formed and confidence is built in the most genuine ways."

Challenges have come up in her journey, both personal and professional. Each one tested her but also built her up. "Every challenge became an opportunity to grow stronger and continue inspiring others," Bejandri says.

Looking ahead, Bejandri dreams big. She has already competed internationally and earned a continental title. Now she wants to keep building a legacy of empowerment. "My vision is to continue mentoring youth, expanding my influence through pageantry and leadership, and inspiring others to live with confidence, faith, and purpose," she says.

For Bejandri Lourens, pageantry is a lifelong path of growth and giving back. Her story shows how one crown can open doors to so much more.



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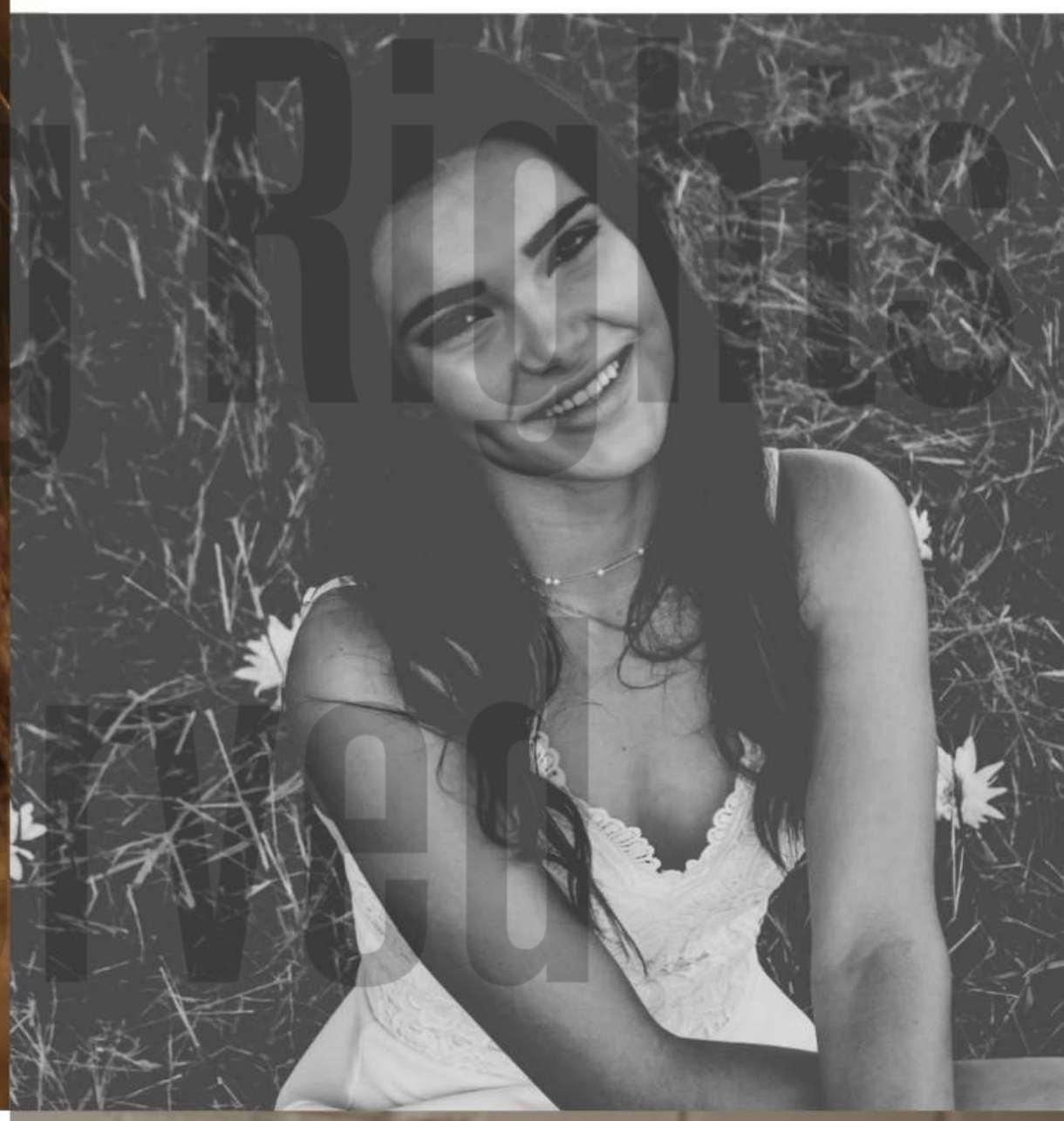

ANKE RICHTER

"Practice your craft, find mentors and surround yourself with people who support you"

#Model

Interview with Anke Richter

Face of PPMC Magazine 2025 Winner

At just 17, Anke is building a name for herself in the modelling industry while studying online from her home in Limpopo. Since starting her journey in July 2024, Anke has balanced schoolwork, castings and photoshoots with determination and focus. She describes herself first as a student who values learning and discipline. “Outside of modelling I’m a student who takes my education seriously,” Anke says. “I love fashion and photography, and I spend my free time with my family and my best friend who keep me grounded.”

Anke’s hard work paid off when she was announced as the Face of PPMC Magazine 2025 Photogenic Winner. The moment was one she will never forget. “Hearing my name called was an emotional high,” Anke shares. “I felt disbelief, gratitude and pride all at once. It felt like a milestone that validated all the effort I’ve put into modelling since I started.”

In that instant, Anke says she thought about the long hours of practice and the people who supported her journey. “I thought of my family, my agency and the photographers who believed in me. Winning felt like confirmation that I’m on the right path. It reminded me that dedication and passion can open doors I once only dreamed about.”

Anke entered the competition because she wanted to challenge herself on a bigger stage. She had already built confidence through other achievements, including competing at Talent Africa where she received her National Federation Provincial Colours for Limpopo, winning a Platinum Senior Award at Start of the Universe, and being a finalist in Opulent 2025. “Those experiences gave me the courage to step forward,” Anke explains. “I saw this competition as an opportunity to grow, meet talented people and push my limits.”

For Anke, being photogenic is not about having a perfect look. “Being photogenic is about presence, expression and connection,” Anke says. “It’s about translating emotion through the lens and working with the photographer to let your personality shine.” She believes that light, pose and subtle expressions work together to tell a story. “You have to feel comfortable enough to be vulnerable so the image feels real and memorable.”

The competition gave Anke many highlights, but one part stood out most. “I loved the creative collaboration during the photoshoots,” Anke says. “Seeing different concepts come to life and sharing the experience with so many talented models was inspiring. Modelling is a collective art. Every shoot is a chance to learn.”

Preparation plays a big role in Anke’s success. Before stepping in front of the camera, she focuses on both physical and mental readiness. “I practise poses and facial expressions, take care of my skin and hair, and choose outfits that match the concept,” Anke explains. “I also communicate with the photographer about the vision. I review reference images and take a few quiet moments to breathe so I can feel present and confident.”

What Anke loves most about modelling is the teamwork and creative process. “Working with photographers, stylists, makeup artists and my agency to create something meaningful is what excites me,” Anke says. “I enjoy the transformation on set and the challenge of embodying different moods. Seeing the final image and knowing we created something beautiful together is the best feeling.”

Anke credits her family and best friend as her biggest supporters. She also speaks highly of her agency, b-U Models South Africa, and her favourite photographer, Younele from Sielsgelukphotography. “Their guidance and belief in me mean everything,” Anke says. “Their encouragement and honest feedback help me stay motivated and focused.”

Winning the title has changed the way Anke sees herself. “It strengthened my confidence and showed me that consistent effort brings real results,” Anke says. “It made me see myself as a serious model with room to grow. I feel bolder about pursuing bigger goals now.”

To other girls who dream of modelling, Anke offers clear advice. “Dream big, stay disciplined and be patient,” Anke says. “Practice your craft, find mentors and surround yourself with people who support you. Never compromise your values for a quick opportunity. Keep your education a priority.”

Through the competition, Anke discovered strengths she did not fully recognise before. “I learned that I can handle pressure and adapt quickly,” Anke says. “I realised how important it is to accept feedback and keep improving. Growth comes from stepping outside your comfort zone.”

Balancing school, personal life and modelling requires careful planning. As an online student, Anke schedules her study time around shoots and commitments. “Time management and discipline are key,” Anke explains. “I make sure I communicate with my family and agency so everything runs smoothly. Rest is also important.”

Looking ahead, Anke has clear goals. She wants to expand her portfolio with diverse, high-quality work, collaborate with respected brands and continue competing. One of her biggest dreams is to grow into national pageants and one day pursue Miss South Africa. “I want to keep developing my skills and representing my community with pride,” Anke says.

Representing PPMC Magazine as a 2025 titleholder is something Anke takes seriously. “It’s an honour and a responsibility,”

Anke says. “I want to be a positive role model for young aspiring models. This title gives me a voice, and I plan to use it to inspire others to chase their dreams with hard work and heart.”

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#Makeup

Meet Cheriska van Staden

Professional Make-up Artist

Cheriska van Staden speaks about makeup with calm confidence and clear purpose. For Cheriska, makeup has never simply been about applying products. It has always been about transformation, confidence, and helping women see themselves in a new light.

“I’ve always been fascinated by the power of transformation,” Cheriska says. “Makeup isn’t just about beauty, it’s about confidence.” She explains that watching a client’s entire energy shift after seeing their finished look is what pushed her to turn her passion into a full-time profession. “There’s something incredibly powerful about helping someone see their own beauty. I knew I wanted a career where I could uplift and empower others every day.”

Cheriska’s journey began in a simple and relatable way. She started doing makeup for friends and family. Word spread, and soon she was asked to do a bride’s makeup. That moment changed everything. “From that moment, I fell in love with being part of such meaningful occasions,” Cheriska says.

Bridal makeup, matric dances, and special events quickly became her focus. She explains that she enjoys being part of days that truly matter in her clients’ lives. “I truly enjoy helping clients feel confident on days that matter most.”

While weddings and matric dances form the heart of her work, Cheriska also loves creating editorial and glam looks. She lights up when speaking about camera-ready makeup. “What excites me most is creating a look that translates beautifully on camera,” she says. “Editorial and glam require precision, balance, and an understanding of lighting.” For Cheriska, every detail counts. “I enjoy perfecting every detail to ensure the final result is flawless.”

Personalisation is central to Cheriska’s approach. No two faces are the same, and no two clients want to feel the same. “I always start with a thorough consultation,” she explains.

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“I listen carefully to my client’s vision, their personal style, and how they want to feel.” From there, she enhances natural features instead of masking them. “My goal is never to mask, it’s to enhance.” Preparation is another key part of her process. Cheriska believes flawless makeup begins long before foundation is applied. “My process always starts with proper skin preparation,” she says. Clean, hydrated, and well-prepped skin forms the base of every look she creates. She tailors skincare to each client’s skin type and uses long-wearing professional products designed to last through tears, dancing, and long celebrations.

In a fast-moving beauty industry, staying updated is essential. Cheriska uses social media as a tool for growth and inspiration. “Social media is a powerful tool for staying inspired,” she says. She follows professional artists, brands, and beauty platforms to stay in touch with international trends. But she does not copy trends blindly.

“Staying updated isn’t just about watching trends. It’s about practicing them.” She tests new techniques, experiments with products, and refines her skills to ensure her clients receive modern and polished results.

One of her most memorable moments came during a matric dance transformation. The client requested a red-carpet glam look with flawless skin, sculpted contour, and a bold eye. “When she was fully dressed and ready, she truly looked like she belonged on a runway,” Cheriska recalls. The most rewarding part was not the makeup itself, but the confidence that followed. “Watching her step into the event with confidence was incredibly rewarding.”

Like many entrepreneurs, Cheriska has faced challenges. Building a loyal client base in a competitive industry was not easy. “One of the biggest challenges was building a loyal client base,” she admits. She overcame this by consistently delivering quality work, encouraging referrals, and maintaining a strong social media presence. Self-doubt was another obstacle. “Over time, through experience, positive client feedback, and continuous learning, I built confidence in my craft and my brand.” Trust is essential during any makeup session.

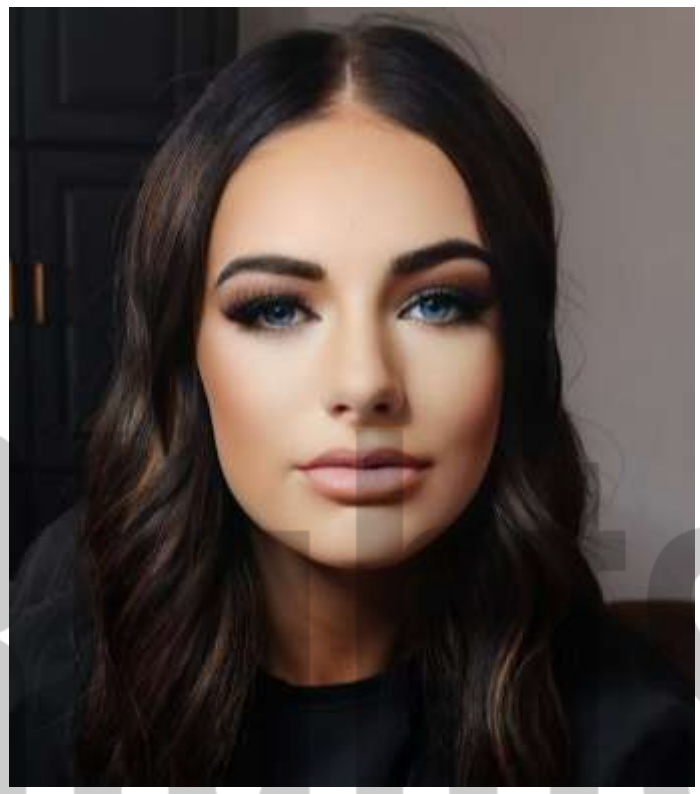
Cheriska ensures her clients feel comfortable and heard. “Clients trust me because I provide expert guidance while respecting their preferences,” she explains. She talks her clients through each step and creates a collaborative space where they can share ideas freely.

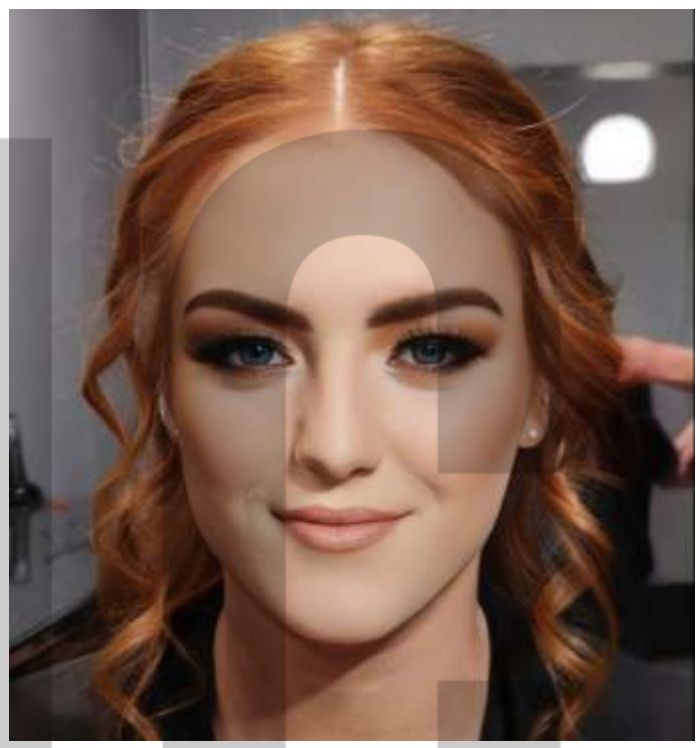
When it comes to her kit, Cheriska believes strong foundations matter. Skin prep products, a reliable foundation, concealer, setting powder, and finishing spray are non-negotiable. “High-quality brushes and tools are just as important as the products,” she adds. Precision and smooth blending are what elevate a look from good to professional.

Balancing creativity with a client’s vision requires careful communication. “Balancing creativity with a client’s vision comes down to collaboration,” Cheriska says. She offers guidance while ensuring the final look feels personal and authentic.

For aspiring makeup artists, her advice is simple but powerful. “Learn to listen,” she says. “Understanding your client’s needs, comfort levels, and vision is just as important as technical skill.” She believes artistry and empathy must go hand in hand.

Looking ahead, Cheriska has clear goals. She aims to grow her brand and become widely known for bespoke bridal, matric, and special occasion glam. “Expanding my presence allows me to share my artistry with a wider audience,” she says with quiet determination. For Cheriska, makeup will always be about more than appearance. It is about confidence, connection, and helping every client walk into their special moment feeling their absolute best.





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Annica Potgieter

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 165

A love for Beauty, Music & People

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#Phata

Interview with Annica Potgieter

Hold That Smile Photography

Annica Potgieter did not start her journey with a camera in hand. She started with a love for beauty, music and people. “I’ve always had a love for photography, but I didn’t know where to start or who to turn to,” Annica says. At the time, she was studying music full time and decided to study photography part time. She completed both qualifications, holding onto two creative passions that would later shape her life.

Her first real break came unexpectedly. “Family members planned to get married and my husband volunteered me to do their photos – mind you, I didn’t even have a camera yet,” she laughs. “He’s been my biggest fan.” That first wedding led to another, and then another. Slowly, what began as curiosity turned into a calling.

Over time, Annica realised photography was more than art. “It became a tool for transformation,” she explains. “Women would arrive at a shoot feeling insecure and leave standing taller, smiling differently, seeing themselves in a new light. That shift became my purpose.” Her business grew into something deeper than beautiful images. It became about empowering women, telling authentic stories and building something rooted in faith and impact.

Today, Annica is known as the original Flying Dress photographer at Hartbeespoort Dam in Gauteng. Her Flying Dress Experience has become her signature offering. Clients choose from 12 flowing couture gowns in bold, elegant colours designed to move dramatically in the wind and light. The shoots take place at the breathtaking Hartbeespoort Dam, where mountains, water and open skies create a cinematic backdrop.

“I guide my clients through posing, movement and expression so they never feel lost or uncomfortable,” Annica explains. “What makes it transformative is not just the dress or the location. It’s the experience.” Many women arrive nervous. During the shoot, something shifts. “They begin to see themselves as strong, graceful and beautiful in motion. For many, it becomes a turning point in how they view themselves.”

That commitment to excellence has not gone unnoticed. Annica moved from number 32 to Top 7 Wedding Photographer in South Africa at the Prowed Awards in just one year. The leap, she says, started with a mindset change. “I made a complete 180-degree shift to choose me,” she shares. “I treated photography not just as a passion, but as a business and a brand.”

She refined her style, elevated her client experience and invested in education. Most importantly, she focused on storytelling. “Instead of chasing trends, I focused on authenticity. Capturing real emotion and connection built trust.” Her dedication was further recognised when she won Best Wedding Photographer 2025 (Gauteng) at the African Excellence Awards and placed Top 3 for Couples Portrait at the TopVendor Wedding Awards. “These awards affirmed my commitment to heartfelt storytelling,” she says. “Weddings and portraits are memories and legacy. They must feel honest and timeless.”

While weddings remain central to her brand, confidence portraits have become her heart work. “Many women have never truly seen themselves as beautiful through their own eyes,” Annica says. “Photography gives me a way to change that.” She speaks of tears, laughter and pride when clients see their images for the first time. “It’s not just about images. It’s about identity and self-worth.”

Her corporate photography has also opened doors to international conferences and global leaders. “I’ve met people from different cultures and seen impact made on global platforms,” she says.

Behind the camera, Annica is a wife, mother and worship team musician at CMA Bikers Church. “Faith is the foundation of everything I do,” she says. “Integrity is non-negotiable.” She believes her family keeps her grounded. “My family is why I am persistent and consistent.” Clients often tell her they feel valued and seen. “That is the culture I intentionally create.”

Balancing motherhood, ministry and business has not always been easy. There were seasons of burnout and doubt in a saturated industry. “My breakthroughs came from clarity of purpose and building systems and boundaries,” she says. “Boundaries have been my biggest safety.”

Her desire to help others led her to start hosting in-person workshops for photographers. “I saw many talented photographers struggling with the business side,” she explains. In her workshops, she teaches editing, business systems, client communication and ethical branding. “Skill alone doesn’t build a sustainable career. Systems and mindset matter just as much.”

One of her most powerful memories remains a Flying Dress session with a woman who arrived deeply insecure. “During the shoot she began to laugh at my silly jokes and truly step into the experience,” Annica recalls. When the client saw her photos, she became emotional and said, “I’ve never seen myself like this before.” Annica pauses when she tells the story. “That moment reminded me why I do what I do.”

Looking ahead, Annica dreams of expanding her Flying Dress Experience, hosting more workshops, mentoring creatives and opening her own studio again. “I want to evolve my brand into a luxury, purpose-driven creative powerhouse,” she says.

Her advice to women building businesses in competitive industries is simple. “Start where you are, with what you have. Be consistent. Stay rooted in your values. Don’t shrink your dreams to fit your circumstances.” She smiles and adds, “You can build a purpose-driven business without compromising your faith, family or integrity. Your story and your impact matter. Step into it unapologetically.”

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JANÉL CORNELIUS

Janél Cornelius still remembers her first ballet class at three years old. Her parents enrolled her at Double Turn Dance Academy in Kuilsriver, hoping she would enjoy it. From the moment she stepped into the studio, Janél felt something special. "From the very first class, I felt at home," Janél says. "Dance wasn't just an activity for me. It became a part of who I am."

Janél fell in love with the music, the discipline and the elegance of ballet. She loved how movement could tell a story without a single word being spoken. What kept her going, she says, was the joy she felt every time she walked into class. "I had wonderful teachers, and that made such a difference. I always felt encouraged to grow." Over the years, dance shaped more than her technique. It shaped her character.

"Dance taught me commitment, perseverance and grace, not only on stage but in life," Janél explains. Even when she faced a serious knee injury that required surgery, she never considered walking away. "That season reminded me that dance is not just something I do. It is something deeply rooted in my heart." With the support of her family and teachers, she recovered and returned stronger.

While dance was a major part of her life, Janél's education followed a different path. Her family chose homeschooling from Grade R through to Grade 12. "My parents wanted an environment that aligned with our values and faith," Janél says. "They wanted my education to focus on character and discipline as much as academics."

Homeschooling allowed her to dedicate time to dance while maintaining strong academic standards. It also taught her independence. "I learned to manage my time and take responsibility for my work from a young age," she says. "It made me self-driven and goal-oriented." Far from feeling isolated, Janél says homeschooling empowered her. "It gave me space to pursue my dreams wholeheartedly."

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#Dancer

Interview with Janél Cornelius

Passion, Dance, Faith and Purpose

At 17, Janél reached a major milestone when she completed her GED through Boston in Kimberley and earned her matric certificate. “It was a proud moment for me,” she says. “It wasn’t a traditional school journey, but it was filled with discipline and commitment.” Around the same time, she stepped into a new role as a dance teacher. “Suddenly, I wasn’t just the student. I was guiding and encouraging young dancers.”

Teaching gave her a new perspective. “It felt surreal to pour into others what had been poured into me since I was three years old,” Janél says. “It taught me patience and leadership in a new way.” She realised early on that age does not determine impact. “Passion and dedication do.”

That belief led her to take a bold step. At a young age, Janél founded J’Elan Dance Academy. “It was never just about starting a business,” she explains. “It was about answering a calling on my heart.” She wanted to create a space where dancers would be trained not only in technique but also in confidence and character. “I wanted every child to feel seen and valued.”

Starting her own academy required courage. “There were moments of doubt,” Janél admits. “But my passion for dance and my love for children outweighed the fear.” Today, she balances running the academy with her own training and modeling commitments. “Balance happens through structure and priorities,” she says. “When I am teaching, I am fully present. When I am modeling, I give that my full focus too.”

Her hard work paid off when her dancers achieved outstanding results at the 2025 AAArts Competition. “It was my first time being the teacher and not the student,” Janél says with a smile. “I was very proud.” Watching her dancers succeed was emotional. “When their names were called, I didn’t just see results. I saw growth. I saw the hard work behind the scenes.”

Beyond dance, Janél has also built a name for herself in pageantry and modeling. Winning titles has strengthened her confidence and leadership skills. She proudly holds the crowns of Miss Congeniality Junior Teen SA, Miss Hope Northern Cape, and Miss Junior Teen SA Northern Cape. “Miss Congeniality reflects character. It shows that kindness matters. Miss Hope reminds me to live intentionally and uplift others,” she explains. Janél was also in the top 30 of “Mej Tiener Huisgenoot,” which gave her further exposure and opportunities.

Through each competition, she learned how to carry herself with grace under pressure, speak with clarity, and represent something bigger than herself. “Pageantry taught me that confidence is not about perfection. It is about knowing who you are,” she says. Being involved in charity work and representing meaningful causes strengthened her sense of responsibility. “A title is not just something you wear; it is something you live out.”

Janél chooses modeling projects carefully. “I focus on alignment with my values and long-term goals,” she explains. “Modeling is not just about being seen. It is about influencing others in a meaningful way.” Her involvement with CANSA is deeply personal. After her grandfather was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer, Janél felt called to make a difference. “Seeing what our family went through inspired me to support others facing similar battles,” she says. “It taught me empathy and compassion.”

Through everything, faith remains her anchor. “Faith and purpose are at the center of everything I do,” Janél says. “Every opportunity is a gift from God.” Her message to young people is simple and clear. “Never lower your standards. Always put God first. Your dreams are valid, and with discipline and faith, you can achieve more than you imagine.”

Looking ahead, Janél plans to grow J’Elan Dance Academy, expand her modeling career, and continue developing as a dancer and leader. “I want to live a life of purpose,” she says. “Whether I am on stage or in the studio, I want every step to reflect dedication and a desire to uplift others.”

Mzimasi
From Football Dreams to Pageant Glory: Mzimasi Mphembele's Inspiring New Journey
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#Talent

Introducing Mzimasi Mphembele

From Setbacks To New Horizons

Mzimasi Mphembele's path into modeling and pageantry didn't begin with a dream of the runway. It began with a health scare that forced him to step away from the one thing that had always defined him — football.

"It was a hot Tuesday morning, and I had just finished training with a friend," Mzimasi says. "When it's very hot, I usually get migraines, but this time it felt like something pressing against my brain, like it wanted to break free from my forehead."

The pain became unbearable later that night. He was taken to a clinic and then transferred to Gandhi Hospital in Phoenix. "After tests the next morning, I was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis. I was admitted for a week and put on a drip. The doctors told me to take a break from football and be careful in extreme heat."

That break hit him harder than the illness itself. "It was devastating. I had just completed my N6 Engineering certificate and was struggling to find an internship. Football was the only thing I had going on."

The quiet days reminded him of another difficult time. "In 2020 during COVID, I almost fell into depression. I had just finished matric and couldn't get into any institutions I applied to. I would overthink a lot about my life while my peers were studying or working."

A friend helped him cope in an unexpected way. "She introduced me to poetry, and I even got some of my work published on fundza.mobi. Writing gave me an outlet, but I stopped when I started studying at Coastal TVET College and life became busy again."

Then came a message that changed everything.

"On 4 November 2024, I got an Instagram DM from Miss 21st Century," Mzimasi explains. "The message said they loved my work and wanted me in their pageant. I was confused because nothing on my profile suggested I was female. I replied to explain I'm male, and they told me they also had a male category."

Curious and excited, Mzimasi began researching male pageantry online. "I watched TikTok videos and Instagram reels to learn how male models walk and pose. That's when I decided to enter Miss & Mr Prestigious KZN 2025 as preparation."

That competition became his first official pageant. "Miss & Mr Prestigious KZN was my first pageant, and I was proud to scoop the 1st Prince sash. That gave me confidence going into Mr 21st Century, which was the next big step for me."

At Mr 21st Century, the competition was tougher. "I went up against experienced models who had been in the industry longer than me, and I fell short. I'm not going to lie, losing hurt. I'm a sore loser," he admits with a laugh. "But losing makes me go back, fix what went wrong, and prepare better for the next opportunity."

That opportunity came at Miss & Mr House of Glamour Boutique. "That pageant was a big turning point. I managed to scoop both the King sash and the Popularity sash. I was honestly shocked and grateful. The Popularity sash meant a lot because it showed me that people were supporting my journey."

Along the way, Mzimasi reached out to experienced figures in the industry for guidance. "I came across Mr Marnus Botha while researching pageantry. I sent him a message, and he shared valuable insight. One thing that stayed with me is that everyone competes for different reasons. For him, it was about using the platform for charity. For me, it was about finding a new passion after football."

Another major opportunity soon followed. "Miss Zinhle Mahaye, the national director of I Am Model Search International, had just secured the national license through Pretty Models. I was chosen to be part of the team that would represent South Africa in Thailand," Mzimasi says. But the dream came with a price tag. "I needed to raise R35,000, and I couldn't manage. I even tried online match betting out of desperation, but I kept losing. It was heartbreaking to miss the chance to compete internationally in my first year."

Despite setbacks, Mzimasi continues to juggle pageantry with his engineering career. "Monday to Friday, I focus on work. I'm an electrician intern at Zama Traffic Signal. There was a day I came from a night shift, went straight to a pageant finale without sleeping, and then went back to work. It's not easy, but I'm committed."

Looking ahead, his goals are clear. "In 2026, I want more exposure, stronger networks, and a chance to compete in a pageant with an international pipeline. I still feel like I have to make up for the Thailand opportunity I lost."

His advice to newcomers is honest. "You need to be mentally, physically, and emotionally strong. Pageantry is demanding, especially near finale days. It can also be expensive if you're funding yourself. Try to get into the right spaces where you can find sponsors. I'm still working on that too." For Mzimasi, pageantry is no longer just a replacement for football. It has become a space for growth, discipline, and purpose. And he is far from done.

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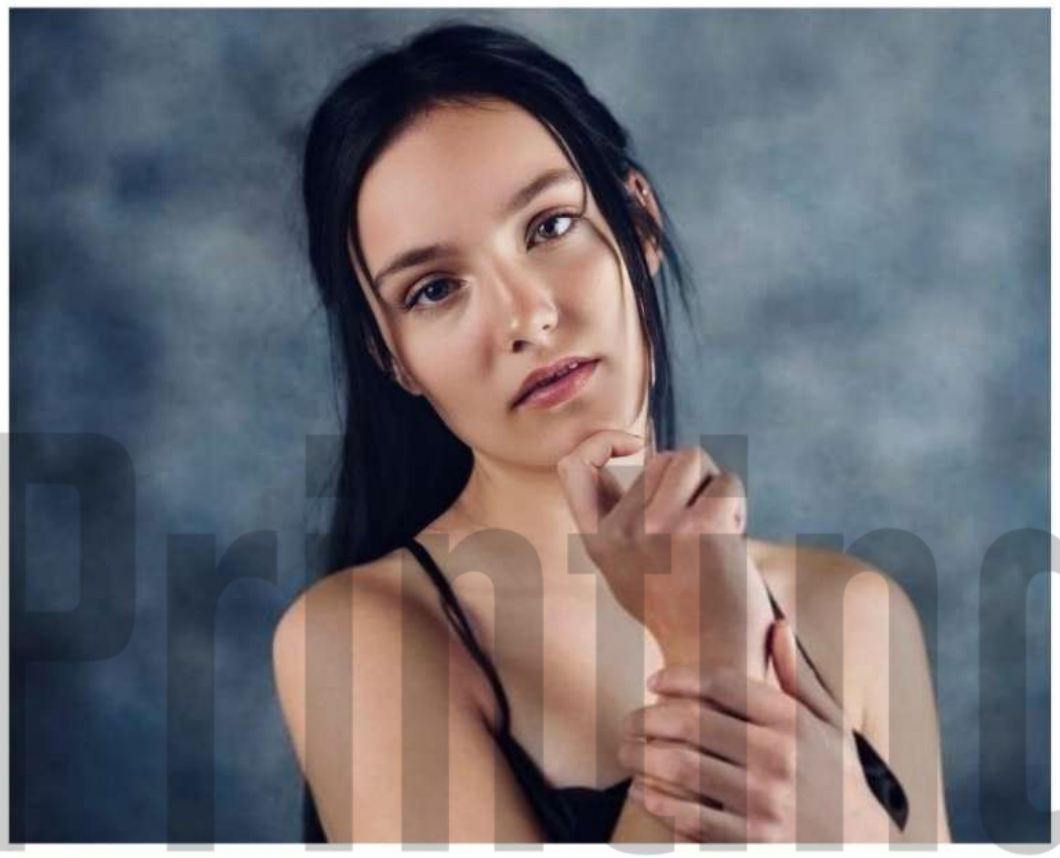
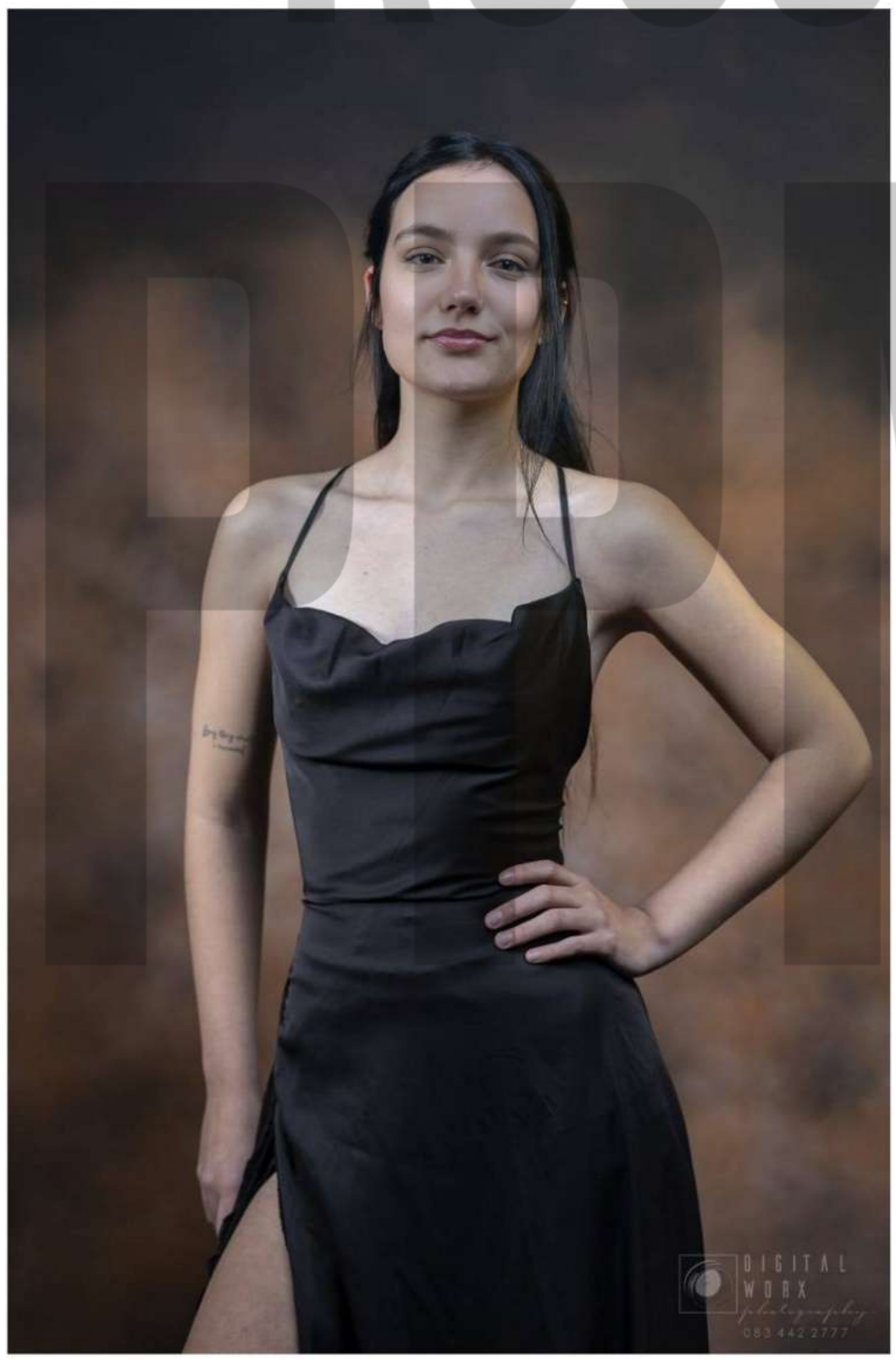
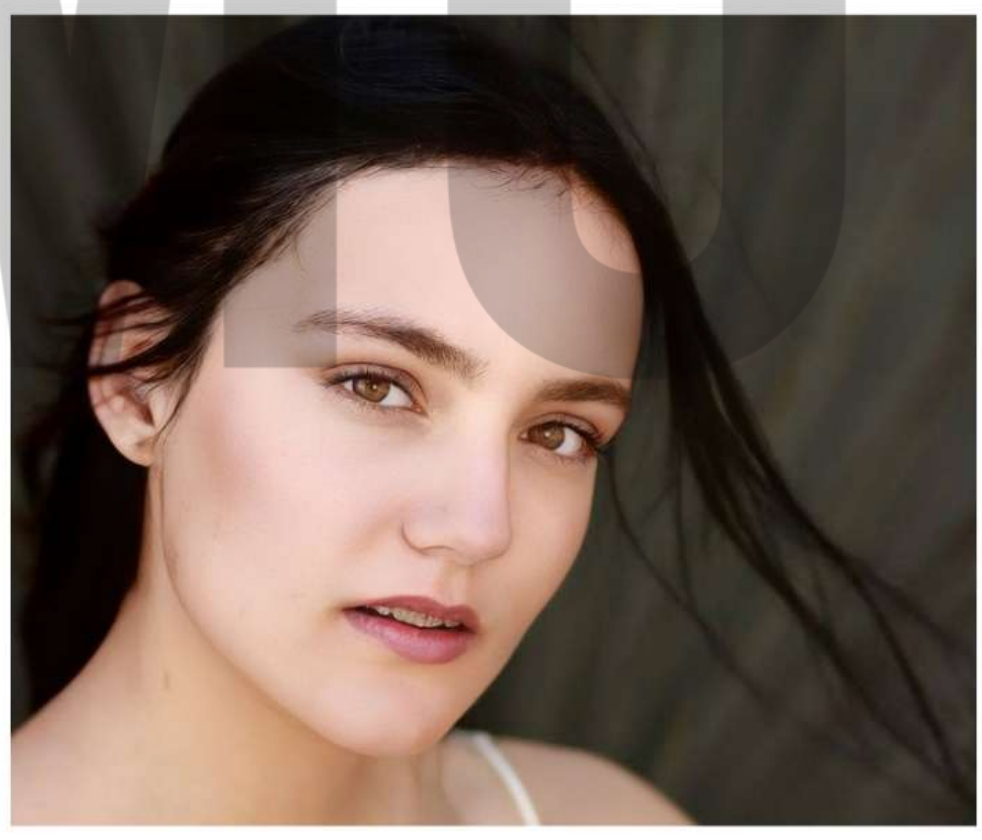


Anzo-lee Nel





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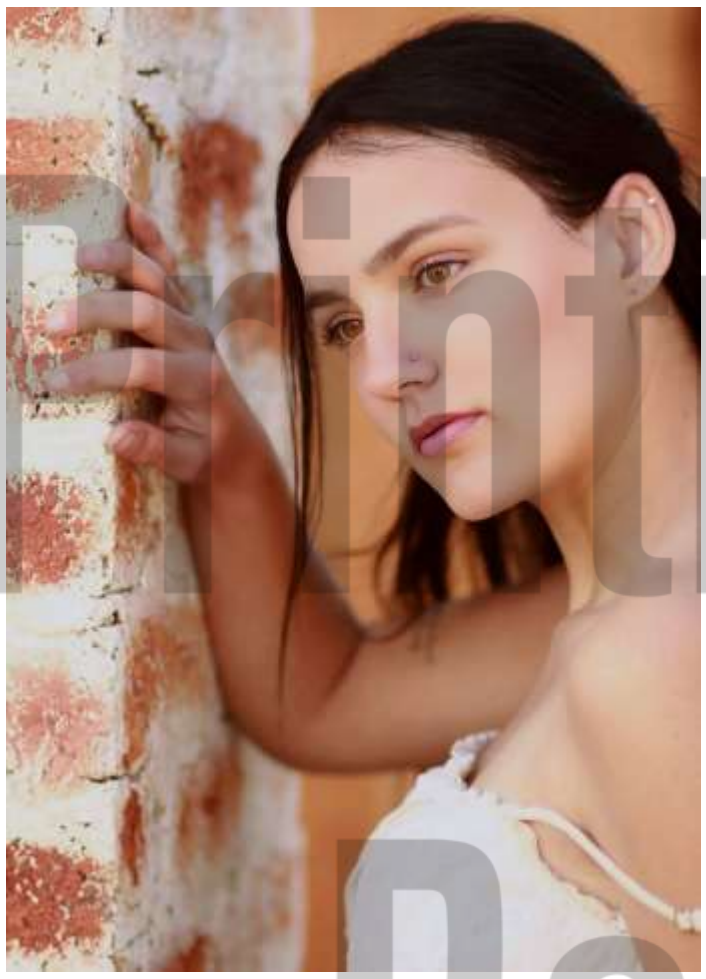
#Model

Interview with Anzo-lee Nel

Small Town Girl with Big Dreams



Anzo-lee Nel is a young model making waves from her small hometown of Meyerton. At 18 years old, she is already carving a name for herself in South Africa's fashion scene. "Living in a small town like Meyerton has its ups and downs for sure," she says.

"We don't get many opportunities here, so if we do, the best option is to take it and make the best of what you have. But for the better part of it, you get really close with the people around you, and they become like family."

Anzo-lee discovered her passion for modeling at a very young age. "I've always dreamt of being a model since I was a little girl," she recalls. "I would always stand in front of the mirror and imagine it was a runway. I'd take heels, even though they were too big, and act like I owned the place." That early confidence and love for fashion set the foundation for her journey today.

Her professional modeling career began with Figures Model Finesse. "It started when I was looking for something to express myself, and I came across Figures Finesse. I took my shot, and I started to follow my dream," she explains. Since then, Anzo-lee has participated in some of South Africa's most exciting fashion events, gaining experience and exposure along the way.

One of her proudest moments was working with Jordan Peterson for the African Glamour Fashion Show 2025. "It has been amazing," she says. "He has been my role model for so long, and when I finally got my chance to work with him, I was so proud to see how far I've come, to be working with SA Munhunt 2024–2025."

Anzo-lee has walked in numerous high-profile runway shows this year. She remembers the backstage moments vividly. "For sure the moments backstage when you get nerves seeing all the competition, but knowing you are going to have the best moments and being proud that I got the chance to take part," she says.

Competing in the Denim and Diamond Fashion Show 2025 was a highlight. "It was honestly the best feeling ever. I was so nervous, but when I found out I got the best dressed award and placed third, I was amazed."

Walking at the International Model of the Year 2025 was another milestone. "It was nerve-wracking, knowing there are over 20 judges looking at you and judging every move. People all over Gauteng were there, and they all had so much potential, yet they were all so unique," she reflects.

Photographers like Hennie Coetsee and Calvin Way have also played a big role in her growth. "They showed me how to express myself through emotion and were so supportive. They have taught me how to grow in every way," she says. For Anzo-lee, expressing herself through photos is about more than just looking good. "It means telling a story without having to say a word.

Every photo captures an emotion, a mood, or a moment of strength and vulnerability. Modeling allows me to turn my feelings, experiences, and confidence into something visual. It's about being real and letting people feel something when they look at the image."

Preparation is key to performing her best, both mentally and physically. "Mentally, I focus on confidence and grounding myself. I remind myself why I started and that I deserve to be there. I take a few deep breaths and clear my mind so I can be fully present. Physically, I make sure I'm well-rested, hydrated, and comfortable in my body. I stretch, check my posture, and take care of my skin because feeling prepared helps me perform at my best," she shares.

Family and friends have been her biggest supporters. "For sure my family and friends and those who have become more like family," Anzo-lee says. Along the way, she has faced challenges. "One of the biggest challenges has been learning to believe in myself in an industry that can be very critical. Rejection and comparison are difficult, but they've taught me to stay strong. I've learned not to take 'no' personally and to see every experience as a chance to grow."

For small-town girls dreaming of modeling, Anzo-lee has a clear message. "I would tell them not to limit themselves because of where they come from. Your background does not define your potential. Stay consistent, be patient with yourself, and don't give up when things take time. Believe in your uniqueness—the things that make you different are often what make you stand out the most."

Looking ahead, Anzo-lee's goals are ambitious. "My goal is to work with well-known brands and photographers while staying true to who I am. I want to grow professionally, gain international exposure, and use my platform to inspire others to feel confident in themselves. Ultimately, I want to build a career that allows me to express myself, create meaningful work, and leave a positive impact," she concludes.

With her talent, drive, and dedication, Anzo-lee Nel is one young model from Meyerton whose journey is just beginning, and the fashion world is watching.

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yarnh.com

#Designer

Interview with Josh Downes

Rooted In Purposeful Design

In the heart of Cape Town, Josh Downes is quietly reshaping the future of menswear through his brand, YARNH. Built on natural fibres, honest production and intentional design, Josh's approach to fashion is thoughtful and deeply personal.

"Clothing has always been a big interest of mine," Josh says. His childhood was shaped by travel. He spent time visiting his parents in North East China, later moving to Moscow and flying through South America where they lived in Bogotá, Colombia.

"I always took notice of what people wore, various cultures, how they dressed and what stood out," he explains. Those early observations stayed with him and slowly formed the foundation of his creative identity.

As he began to understand fabrics and manufacturing on a deeper level, his focus became clear. "Natural fibres felt like the correct direction once I started to dive deep into the complex world of textiles," Josh says. That understanding led to the launch of YARNH, a menswear brand built entirely on hemp, linen, organic cotton and wool.

For Josh, the choice of materials is instinctive. "These are the fibres I naturally gravitate towards and feel most comfortable in. They breathe, they soften over time, and they have a grounding quality that helps me feel calm and at ease." He believes clothing should improve with age rather than deteriorate.

"They age beautifully, which means the garments improve with wear rather than feeling disposable," he says. "I hope that translates into how modern men move through their day, feeling comfortable and confident, choosing pieces that support a slower, more intentional way of living."

His design philosophy is inspired by what he describes as a "kaalvoet" mindset. "I try not to complicate anything I design. Simple, or less is sometimes much more," Josh explains. "I focus on fit, fabrics, feeling and overall comfort rather than overdesigning any garment." He wants his customers to experience the same ease as walking barefoot. "I want you to feel in tune, in touch and wearing pieces that make you feel your best."

That commitment to traceability and regenerative practice earned Josh the Farm-to-Fashion Award at the Twyg Sustainable Fashion Awards. "It was my first award as a designer and felt incredible," he says. "I was determined to remain on a path of traceability and regenerative practices, and it felt like I was having an impact on South African menswear."

The recognition strengthened his resolve to remain transparent about fabric sourcing, design decisions and the educational messaging behind each collection.

In 2025, YARNH was crowned Best Sustainable Brand at the South African Fashion Awards. "It was a huge honour and incredible to be recognised for the work I've been putting in," Josh says. "There is a growing space for ethical fashion, not only in South Africa but globally. People are far more conscious about the textiles they buy."

Josh blends South African heritage with a refined global aesthetic. His Summer SS26 collection combines relaxed silhouettes with locally sourced fabrics and distinctly South African names like the Llandudno Catch.

"The silhouettes are relaxed and modern, designed to travel well beyond Cape Town, while the materials and references stay rooted here," he explains. "It's that balance between local story and global wearability that defines the brand."

Slow fashion requires patience. Josh begins every collection with fabric selection. "Once I have a library of well-selected fabrics, I put a collection together from there," he says. Suppliers such as Hemporium and Rotex play an important role in sourcing quality materials. From there, he moves into trims, cut and construction, layering storytelling into every stage. Balancing YARNH with his career as an art director in television commercials, and life at home with three young sons, is demanding. "I go to bed thinking about it and wake up thinking about it. It's nonstop," Josh admits. "It's been a long, hard journey of constantly working on every aspect of building a brand, but I love it. It gives me purpose and drive."

His ideal customer reflects his own mindset. "He moves through the world with quiet confidence. He values quality over noise, intention over excess," Josh says. "When he wears YARNH, I hope the story he tells is one of ease and purpose. It's not about standing out loudly, but about feeling rooted and confident in who he is."

One of the biggest challenges has been cost. Natural, locally sourced fabrics come at a higher price. "Rather than chasing large volumes through cheaper alternatives, I've chosen to work in smaller, more intentional runs," Josh explains. "Staying commercially relevant isn't about producing more. It's about producing better."

Looking ahead, Josh dreams of travelling overseas to source fabrics directly from ethical farmers and mills, and one day opening a standalone flagship store in Cape Town. International reach is part of the vision, but his immediate goal is to cement YARNH's place as a leading South African menswear brand.

For aspiring designers and entrepreneurs, Josh keeps his advice simple. "If you believe you can do it, and you tell yourself every day you can do it, then go for it. Your unique voice will come from practice, your ethical practices will come from learning, and sustainability will come from curiosity."

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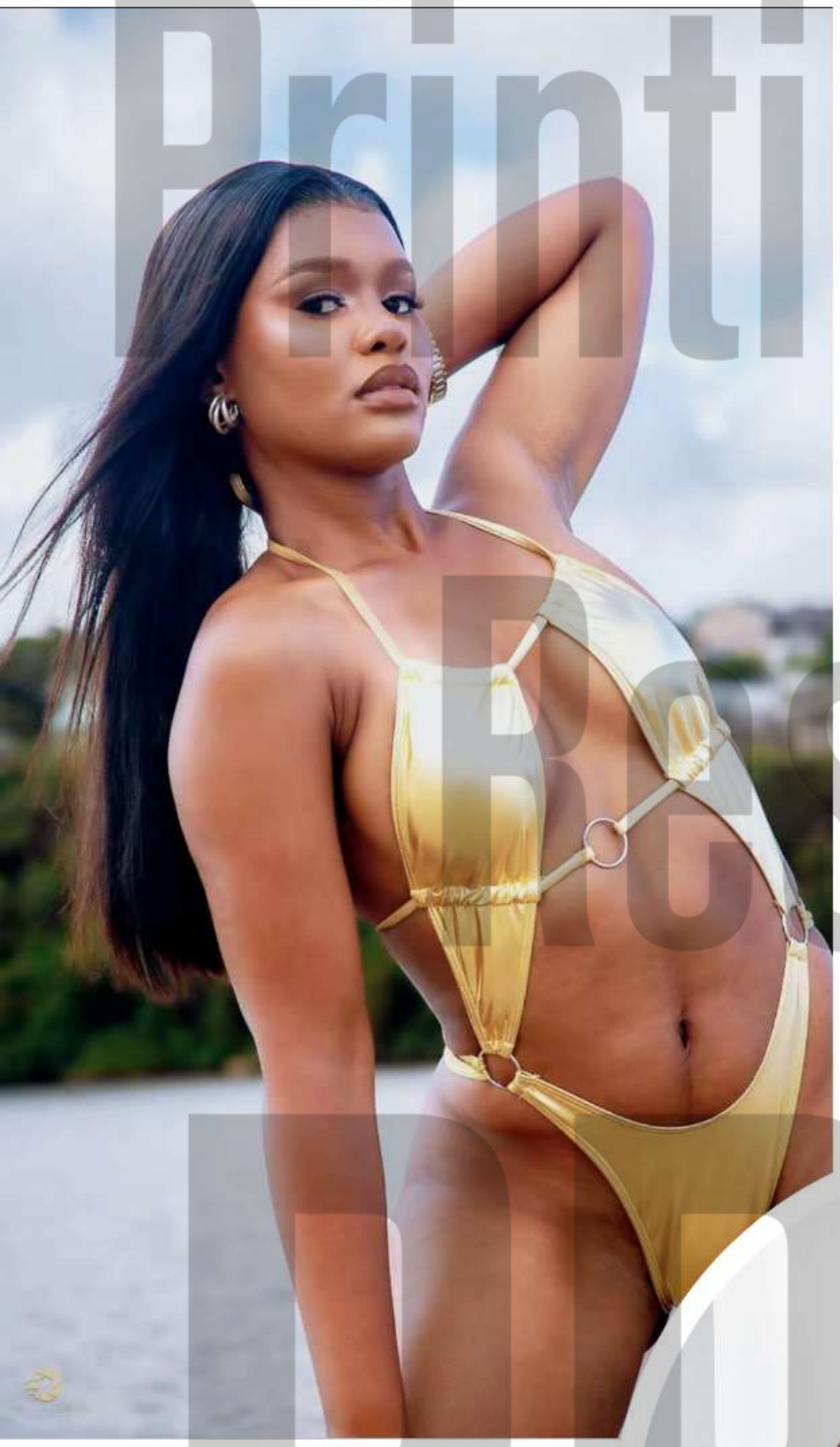
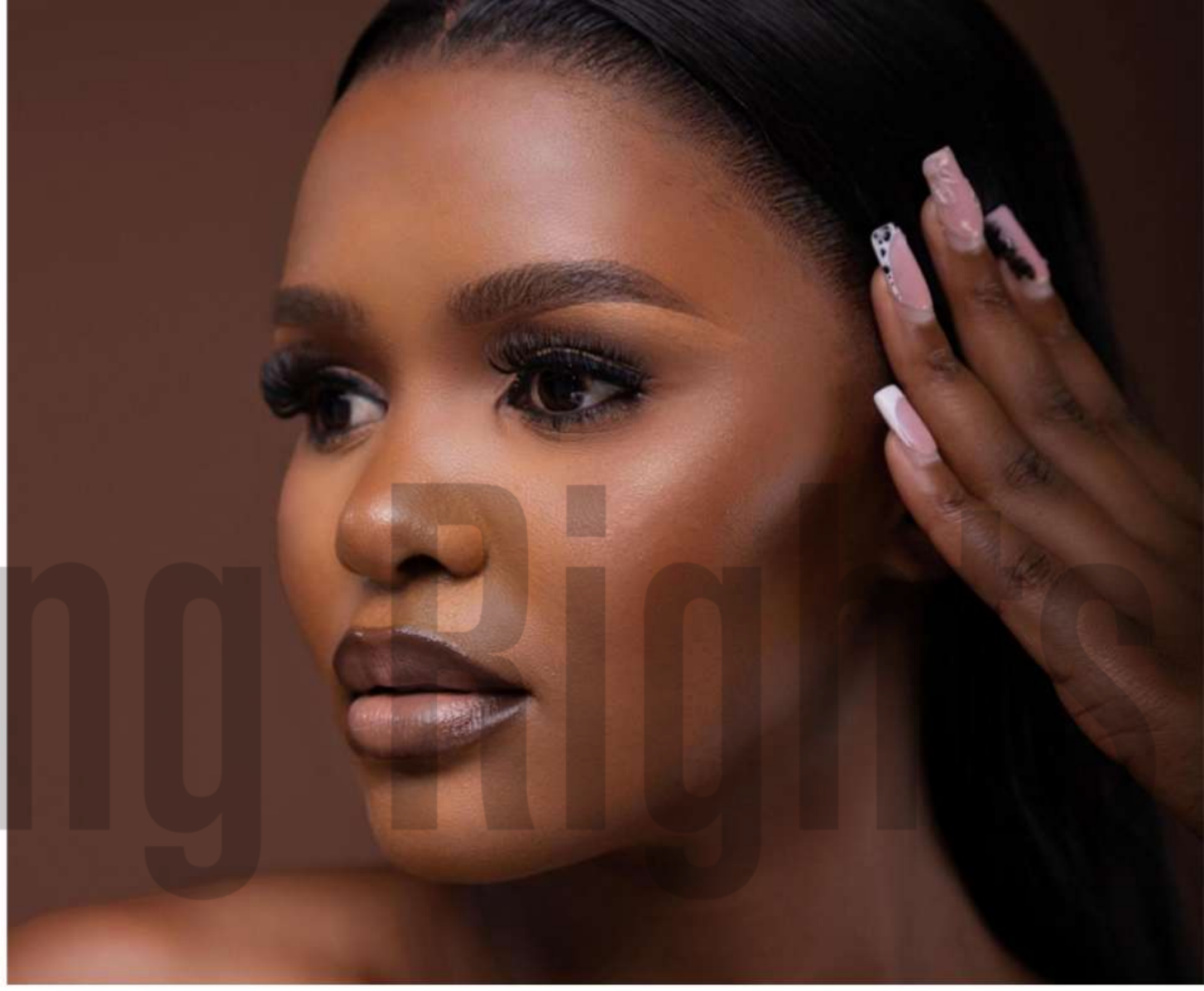
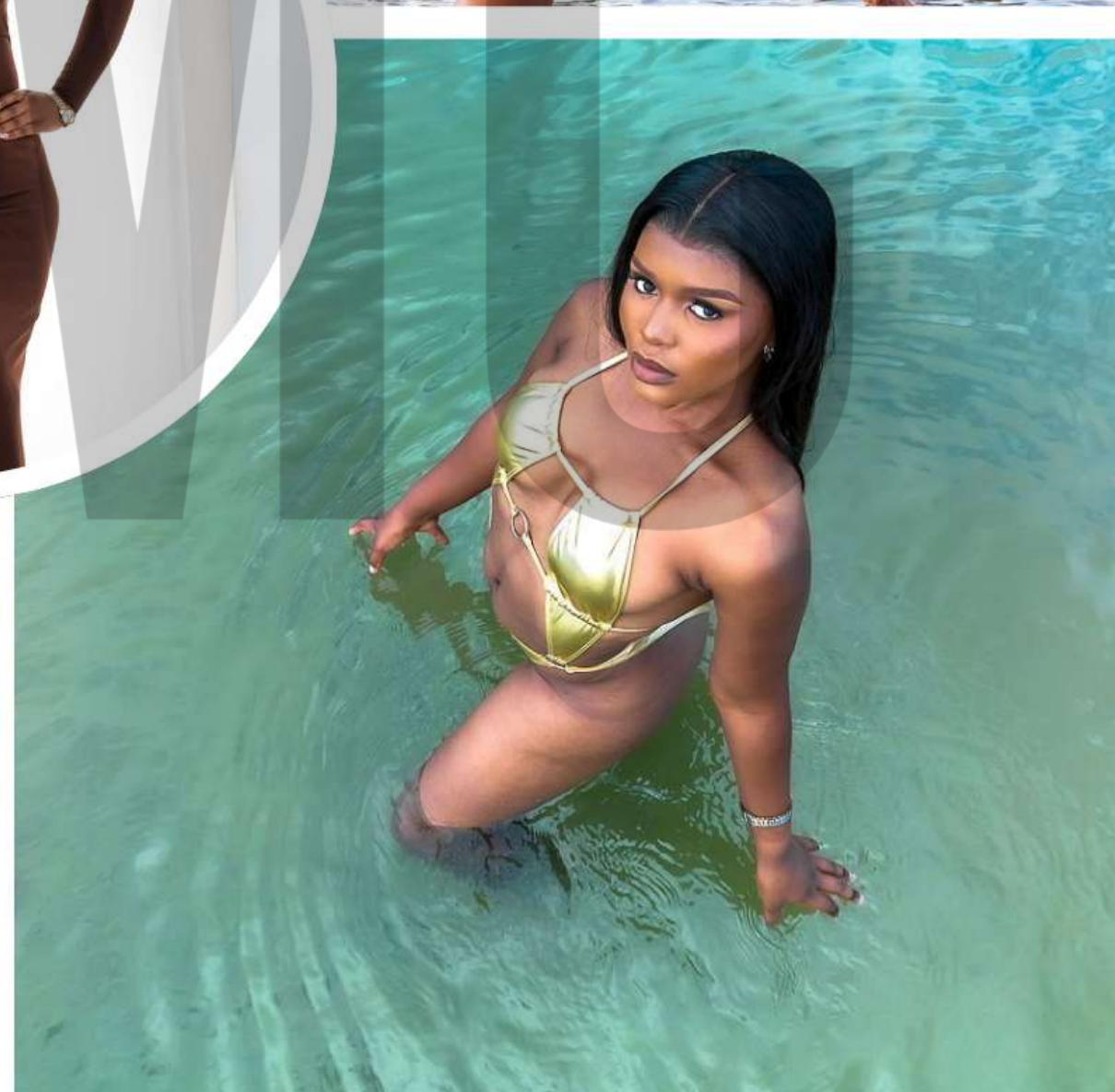
Mihlali Msithiseli







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#Model

Interview with Mihlali Msithiseli

Miss Grand South Africa 2026 Finalist

When Mihlali saw the email confirming she had been selected as a finalist for Miss Grand South Africa, it was just after midnight. Instead of sleeping, she was staring at her phone in disbelief. “I screamed,” Mihlali says, laughing at the memory. “I just sat there thinking, is this real?”

For Mihlali, the moment felt bigger than an announcement. It felt like everything had come full circle. “I kept replaying the journey, the prayers, the work,” she explains. There was one catch. Finalists were not allowed to tell anyone until the official public announcement. “That was the hardest part. I had to keep this huge dream to myself. I was so excited I couldn’t even sleep.”

She describes the moment as a reminder. “When you stay consistent and believe in yourself, the right doors do open,” she says simply. The decision to enter Miss Grand South Africa was not random. Mihlali says this year’s theme, “The Rise of the Phoenix,” felt deeply personal. “The moment I saw it, I felt such a connection. It wasn’t just a theme to me. It was my story.”

Mihlali speaks openly about seasons in her life where she felt broken and uncertain. “I’ve had moments where I felt small, but I chose to rise. I chose to take control of my life and step into my power,” she says. The pageant’s stand against abuse and violence also played a major role in her decision. “Their fight against abuse and violence is my fight. It’s something I carry in my heart.” For Mihlali, this platform is about more than wearing a crown. “Now I don’t just get to speak about it. I get to actively make an impact. That’s what motivated me. Purpose.”

When she talks about transforming pain into power, her voice becomes steady and clear. “It meant choosing not to let my past define my future,” she says. “What hurt me didn’t have to hold me.” She explains that healing was not one dramatic turning point. “It wasn’t one big moment. It was a daily decision. A decision to heal. A decision to grow. A decision to use my voice instead of my silence.” Today, that choice shapes how she lives. “I don’t just survive. I rise. And I help others rise with me.” Resilience has played a major role in shaping her character. “I don’t break under pressure,” Mihlali says. “I bend, I learn, and I rise.” She has learned that strength does not always look loud or dramatic. “Sometimes it looks like showing up when you’re tired. Sometimes it looks like choosing peace when you’ve known chaos.”

Because of those experiences, Mihlali says she has developed emotional intelligence, compassion and discipline. “I don’t just react to challenges. I respond with intention,” she explains. “Setbacks are not the end of your story. They prepare you for your next chapter.” Empowerment, for Mihlali, is deeply personal. “It means reclaiming your voice,” she says. “It means looking at your story, both the beautiful and painful parts, and deciding that it will not limit you.”

She remembers the moment she stopped shrinking herself to fit into certain spaces. “I started standing fully in who I am,” she says. “It’s choosing confidence even when doubt whispers. It’s choosing healing even when it’s uncomfortable.” Now, empowerment also means helping others. “True empowerment isn’t just personal. It spreads.”

Mihlali uses her voice carefully and intentionally. “Healing starts with honest conversations,” she says. She speaks openly about growth and breaking negative cycles, hoping her honesty gives others permission to do the same.

As part of a new generation of bold women, Mihlali hopes to represent balance. “Strength and softness can coexist,” she says. “We can be ambitious and compassionate. We can lead and still heal.” She wants young women to understand that boldness is not about being the loudest person in the room.

“It’s about being authentic. It’s about standing in your truth, even when it’s uncomfortable.” Her journey has not been without challenges. Mihlali admits she has faced moments that tested her confidence and identity. “There were times I felt silenced and unsure of my own strength,” she says. Rising above those moments required honesty. “It wasn’t about pretending they didn’t hurt. It was about deciding they would not define me. I rebuilt my self-worth piece by piece.”

Grace and integrity guide her decisions both on and off the stage. “Grace reminds me to move with humility and compassion, even under pressure,” she says. “Integrity reminds me to stay aligned with my values, whether people are watching or not.” For Mihlali, purpose always matters more than applause.

Representing such a powerful platform comes with responsibility. “It’s about using it wisely,” she explains. “To speak with purpose, act with integrity, and create real impact. It’s not just about me. It’s about every person who needs hope or inspiration.”

When asked who inspires her to keep pushing forward, Mihlali pauses. “The young girl I once was,” she says softly. “The one who felt lost and surrounded by darkness. I promised her I would rise. Every step I take now is for her.”

If crowned Miss Grand South Africa, Mihlali plans to focus on speaking out against abuse and violence while advocating for healing. “This platform isn’t just an opportunity to be seen,” she says. “It’s an opportunity to make a lasting impact.” Her advice to young women who feel defined by their past is clear. “Choose to rise above what once hurt you. Believe in your strength. Own your story. The darkness you faced can become the light you share.”

As for her legacy, Mihlali hopes it will be one of healed and empowered women. “Women who take up space without shrinking. Women who speak up and lead with purpose and compassion,” she says. For Mihlali, pageantry is not the final goal. It is a vehicle for change, growth and lasting impact.

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Motjatji Queen Letsoalo

"Take up space and stop listening to negative comments that say you can't do it"

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#Finalist

Meet Motjatji Queen Letsoalo

Limpopo Model Search 2026 Finalist

At 24, Motjatji is stepping into the modeling world with faith, determination, and a story shaped by both rejection and belief. The Polokwane finalist for Limpopo Model Search 2026 describes herself as “a daring, dauntless go-getter” and a woman led by prayer. Her journey may be new, but her dream has lived in her heart since childhood.

“I was super thrilled and amped. I could not believe my eyes,” Motjatji says about the moment she saw the message confirming she had made it as a finalist. “A part of me felt hopeful despite doubtful noises in my head that kept telling me I am not good enough.”

Those doubts did not come from nowhere. Motjatji had reached out to modeling agencies before and faced rejection more than once. “All the agencies look for a certain talent, skill, or physique,” she explains. “Unfortunately, I did not stand a chance to qualify for what they were looking for, and that was totally fine. Although the rejections battled my self-esteem, I always found a way to try again.”

That determination pushed her to take a leap of faith and enter the competition, even without formal training or agency experience. “My modeling journey just started now,” Motjatji says. “When I came across this competition and saw that no experience was needed, I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to start.”

Growing up in Limpopo, Motjatji drew inspiration from women who broke barriers on big stages. She names Shudufhadzo Musida, Zozibini Tunzi, and Ndavi Nokeri as some of the role models who kept her dream alive. “They kept proving that all my wildest dreams of being a model are valid,” she says.

One of the things that excites her most about the competition is seeing young girls confidently stepping into the spotlight. “I saw a video of kids doing runway walks and I couldn’t be prouder,” Motjatji says. “I love seeing females being creative and confident in their own skin and color, because a five-year-old me would not have had the confidence to do that. It really makes me happy because there is no limit to what women can do, no matter their age or size.”

Behind her growing confidence is a personal battle she has had to fight for years. “What challenged me the most was overcoming body dysmorphia,” she shares. “Being able to love my little body after years of being called all sorts of names was tough.” She admits there was a time she tried to gain weight in unhealthy ways just to meet society’s expectations. “Right now, I can confidently say I love my body. No woman deserves to feel less than what they are. Be kind and say no to body shaming.”

Motjatji says the competition has already changed how she sees herself. “It made me feel seen and worthy,” she says. “The same pictures that once got me rejected by other agencies gave me hope when I made it to the next round. It made me stand tall and believe that I can be a model.” A Bible verse keeps her grounded through the journey. “I am more precious than jewels. Proverbs 3:15 drives me to stand strong.”

Looking ahead, Motjatji sees herself in commercial and pageant modeling. “I am leaning more towards pageantry,” she says. “Wherever I am starting right now will be the best foundation, and I am grateful beyond measure for the opportunity to showcase my talent.”

Her support system has been a major source of strength. “My mom, my brother, my family, and my friends really hyped me up,” she says with a smile. She recalls a moment when a friend voted for her dozens of times. “I felt like crying because I didn’t feel like I deserved that kind of love.” When she almost gave up after forgetting her heels in Cape Town before filming a runway video, it was her younger sister who stopped her. “She said, ‘You can’t make it this far just to give up now.’ That showed me how much they believed in me.”

Motjatji has learned that putting yourself out there requires a strong mindset. “I need to build a positive character that will help me handle negative remarks,” she says. She has also become more aware of the pressures women face about their bodies. “The pressure is real, but building a strong character will help me break through it.”

Prayer remains at the center of her routine. “Prayer calms my mind,” she says. Before shoots, she starts her day with prayer, eats a light meal, and reminds herself that she can do it. She also plays tennis, which she says strengthens her focus and mental resilience.

Motjatji believes her adaptability, strong work ethic, and confidence help her stand out. “I follow instructions, I am kind, and I carry myself with a unique posture on the runway,” she says.

Her biggest dream is to win the title of Miss South Africa and use her platform to uplift others. “Where I come from, some girls grow up in tough environments and feel like their dreams are out of reach,” Motjatji says. “I want to inspire them and give them hope.”

Her message to other young women is clear. “Take up space and stop listening to negative comments that say you can’t do it,” she says. “Be yourself, be confident, love yourself, and take everything one day at a time. It all starts with one step and faith as small as a mustard seed.”

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PALESA BOIKANYO PHAHLE

#Pageant

Meet Palesa Boikanyo Phahle

Miss Teen Legacy International 2026

A story by:
Etienne Vermaak

At just 17, Palesa is already speaking with the calm confidence of someone who knows exactly who she is. The Vaal Triangle matric learner from Riverside High School balances Economics, History and Consumer Studies with a busy life that includes baking, reading, dancing and a deep love for the arts.

“I have a very deep love for arts, especially poetry, singing and drama,” Palesa says with a smile. But it is pageantry that has given her a powerful platform to share her voice with the world.

Palesa’s journey began in 2017 when she watched the Miss South Africa 2017 broadcast. “I started becoming curious about pageants and what they were,” she recalls. A year later, watching Miss South Africa 2018 changed everything. Seeing Tamaryn Green take the crown and later shine at Miss Universe lit a spark in her heart. “I think that’s how I fell in love with pageantry,” she says. “Not for the glitz and glam, but for what I can and am able to do with the platform.”

When Palesa first stepped onto the pageant stage, it was not easy. Competing against girls with more experience left her doubting herself. “I’d always doubt myself and my abilities,” she admits. The turning point came when she decided to trust herself and lean on her support system. “I overcame this by learning how to trust myself and seek reassurance from my support system.” That lesson would carry her through many challenges.

Today, as Miss Teen Legacy International, Palesa understands that the crown is more than a title. “Being a title holder is about how you use the platform to promote both the organization and your initiative,” she explains. Balancing these responsibilities with her school work and personal life requires discipline. “I balance this with my personal life by having a schedule and prioritizing what’s important.”

Pageantry has shaped her in ways she never expected. “It has given me the opportunity to showcase who Palesa is and what she brings to the table,” she says. Through the sisterhood she found in competitions, she discovered her inner strength. “I learned to find my strength from and within myself.”

One of her most treasured memories happened during international pageant week. “We had a lot of activities but my favourite one was definitely the slumber party we had,” she laughs. “Even though it happened a few days before I got crowned, I had the best time of my life with the girls.” It was a reminder that beyond the gowns and interviews, real friendships are formed backstage.

Education and self-confidence are the causes closest to her heart. “I believe both aspects are vital for personal growth and success,” Palesa says. Through her advocacy, she hopes to help her peers rediscover their strengths and reconnect with what they love. “My goal is to ensure that my voice is heard through different parts of the world, empowering them with the knowledge that they are able to take charge of their futures, face their fears and never doubt their abilities.”

Preparing for international competition required focus and guidance. Palesa was coached by Thulani Ndzotyana from Stride Institute. “She helped me with my public speaking skills and how to answer questions,” Palesa explains. “She inspired me to be more of my authentic self and to never be scared to showcase who I am inside and out.”

Ask Palesa how she defines beauty, and her answer is simple. “Beauty to me is being your authentic self, celebrating and looking beyond your imperfections.” She believes pageants today look beyond appearance. “It’s about what you’re capable of, what you bring to the table and how you use your skills with the platform to promote positive changes.”

Her advice to young people who dream of entering pageants is clear. “Be yourself. Be raw, be real. Don’t try to be someone else.” She also encourages research. “See if that particular organization aligns with both you and your initiative.”

Criticism and stereotypes still exist, but Palesa refuses to let them define her. “I simply choose to ignore them,” she says. “The advice I always received is to never let people’s words define who I am becoming or what’s meant for me.” Through social media, she uses her platform to raise awareness of social issues locally and globally, encouraging others to be part of solutions.

Behind the scenes, pageantry is not always perfect. Palesa remembers a stressful moment at the Miss Inspirational Teen South Africa 2025 finale. “One of my heels broke right before the evening gown round,” she recalls. “So I had to wear a different pair of heels, but it was worth it.” It was yet another lesson in staying calm under pressure.

Looking ahead, Palesa’s dreams stretch far beyond her current title. She hopes to study in Paris, continue modelling and develop her acting career. No matter where life takes her, one thing remains certain. “I want to continue advocating for education and self-confidence,” she says. For Palesa, the crown is not the destination. It is only the beginning.

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Ntandwenhle Mkhize

Runway Dreamer Takes Flight

#Finalist

Ntandwenhle Luthando Mkhize

Durban Model Search 2026 Finalist

Ntandwenhle Luthando Mkhize, mostly known as Enhle, is a 21-year-old dreamer from the hot city of Richard's Bay in KwaZulu-Natal. With a calm presence and a strong sense of self, Enhle describes herself as "a cat — sarcastic and down-to-earth, yet loving, adorable, and radiating an amazing aura." Her love for music, meditation, and quiet moments reflects the balance she maintains while chasing big dreams.

Finding out she was selected as a finalist for Durban Model Search 2026 was "an incredible feeling," she says. "I was filled with excitement and hope for a dream I've nurtured since I was young. I know I was born to be on the runway — it's just a matter of time." That moment confirmed that her hard work, patience, and belief in herself were starting to pay off.

Enhle explains that the decision to enter the competition came naturally. "I saw the advert and thought, 'This is my moment to shine.' One famous rapper said, 'If you have a dream, keep chasing it,' and that was the spark that set me on this path." She recalls moments of doubt and discouragement, like when a friend once told her she couldn't model because of her height and figure. "But look at me now — a finalist in the Durban Model Search! That moment reminds me that dreams are bigger than any doubt others may have."

Her journey into modeling is just beginning. "I'm still an amateur," she admits, "taking photos for my socials, and the closest I've felt to a runway is walking in heels at church — yet people often tell me I should model. This is just the start." Despite the humble beginnings, Enhle has quickly discovered the highs and lows of competition life.

"The most exciting part so far has been seeing the positive responses when I shared my poster," she says. "Witnessing the support boosted my confidence and made me realize how much people believe in me." Asking people to vote for her has been a challenge, she admits, "but even that taught me perseverance." These experiences have helped her grow not only as a model but also as a person. "Even if I don't win, I now know I can keep chasing this dream and succeed in the future," she explains.

When it comes to modeling style, Enhle is clear about her path. "I'm passionate about runway, commercial, and editorial modeling. Pageants aren't my main focus, but I respect them. Ultimately, I belong on the runway." She credits her late supporter, Pastor Mrs. Nozi Nyawo, who recently passed away due to cancer, as her biggest inspiration. "She always called me 'Miss South Africa' and pushed me to apply. Though she's not physically here, I feel her encouragement from heaven," Enhle says.

One of the most surprising lessons she's learned is that perfection isn't required in modeling. "You don't have to be perfect to be a model — anyone can be a model, no matter their background. Humans are art, meant to be displayed." Her preparation for castings, shoots, or runway walks is simple but powerful: "I remind myself that I've got this and that I just need to be myself because I'm already a model in existence."

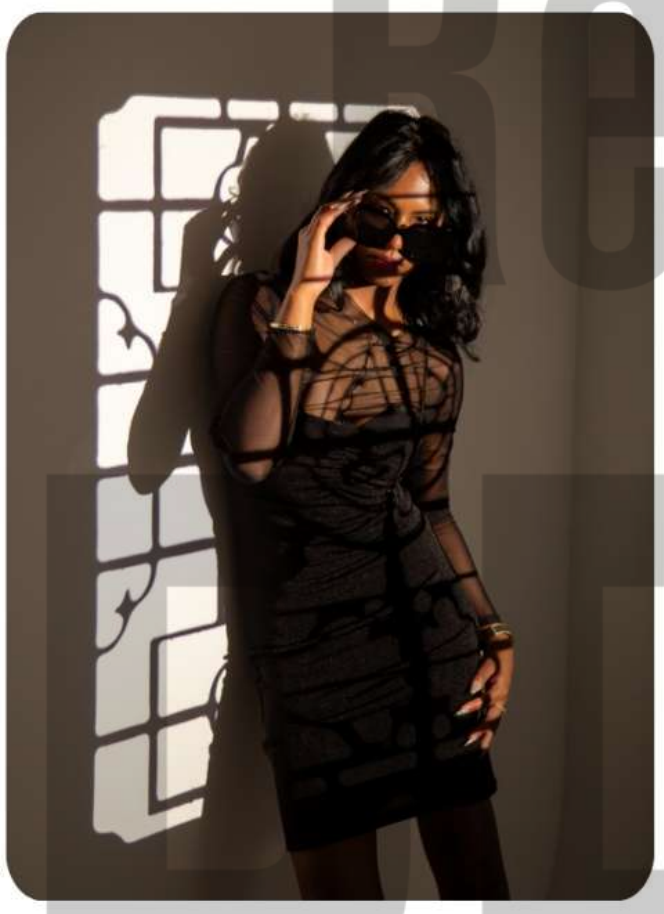
Enhle believes what sets her apart from the other finalists is something natural. "Modeling is in my DNA — I naturally carry a model aura even when I'm not trying." Winning the Durban Model Search 2026 would mean stepping fully into the reality she was born for. "It would allow me to finally be my true self and ensure that my potential isn't wasted," she says. Her ultimate goal is ambitious but focused: "My biggest dream in the industry is to walk at Paris Fashion Week and be part of major fashion shows worldwide."

For young people who feel nervous about entering competitions, Enhle has simple advice: "Girl, just do it. You have nothing to lose but so much to gain." Her story proves that with determination, self-belief, and a willingness to push past fear, dreams can begin to take shape — even in the face of doubt.

Enhle's journey is only getting started, but her drive and natural talent have already begun to leave a mark. With a love for modeling and a commitment to chasing her goals, she is poised to take the fashion world by storm — one runway at a time.

Reserved

ANGELIQUE GOVENDER



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#Finalist

Introducing Angelique Govender

Miss Gauteng 2026 Semi-Finalist

A story by:
Etaiya Briscoe

Angelique's journey into modeling began long before she ever stepped in front of a camera. It started at home, listening to her mother speak about her own experiences in the industry. "From a young age, my mom would share stories about her modeling career," Angelique says. "Through those stories, I saw far more than beauty. I saw strength, intelligence and grace."

Angelique grew up in a close-knit family of three. She describes her mother as the most beautiful woman she knows, not only because she is her mom, but because of the powerful example she set. Losing her father to cancer became a defining moment in her life.

"His passing strengthened my desire to use my platform for a greater purpose," she explains. "Modeling, for me, is not just about appearance. It's about using visibility to inspire strength, hope and courage in others, especially women facing health challenges."

Now a semi-finalist for Miss Gauteng, Angelique says her motivation goes far beyond a crown. "Winning would be an honour, but my deeper purpose is to ignite confidence and courage in other women," she says. "I want young women to look at me and feel seen and represented. I want them to chase their dreams unapologetically." With two years of experience in the industry, Angelique admits that building recognition has been one of her biggest challenges. "I don't want people to just see a face. I want them to remember the name and the story behind it," she says.

Social media has helped her connect authentically with her audience. "It allows me to showcase who I am beyond modeling." She views this stage of her career as a learning phase that has taught her patience, consistency and confidence.

Angelique draws inspiration from women who changed the face of fashion. She speaks with admiration about Alek Wek. "She faced immense adversity because of her skin colour, yet she redefined beauty standards on a global scale," Angelique says. She is also inspired by Naomi Sims, who broke barriers for women of colour during a time when representation was limited. "They remind me that beauty becomes powerful when paired with courage."

Although she has not yet received formal training, Angelique was recently signed with Jordan Legacies Model Management Agency. "I'm excited to learn, grow and refine my skills," she says. "I look forward to gaining industry knowledge and professionalism that will elevate my career."

Her personal style is just as layered as her story. "My style is diverse and emotion-driven," she explains. On relaxed days, she finds comfort in wearing her father's oversized tops. "They bring nostalgia," she says softly. When stepping out, she prefers bodycon dresses, jeans or baggy cargos paired with tekkies, which she calls her signature. "It doesn't define who I am. It reflects how I feel."

Fitness plays a central role in her life. Angelique trains daily, focusing on different muscle groups throughout the week. "Every session includes at least two workouts of 45 minutes each," she says. Her second workout is always a relaxed walk. Health is a priority in her family due to their genetic history. "I also read at least one chapter every day to nurture my mental health and personal growth."

Networking, she believes, is essential in the modeling world. "It's about connecting with the right people," she says. "For me, it's about building genuine relationships rooted in respect and shared values." Social media has also played a significant role in expanding her reach. "It has been instrumental in helping me build visibility and tell my story."

To aspiring models, Angelique offers honest advice. "Don't be afraid," she says. "Fear held me back in the beginning. Confidence is built through action, not perfection."

Beyond modeling, Angelique has clear academic ambitions. She is currently studying law and hopes to further her studies in medicine. "Education represents independence and the freedom to create change," she says. Professionally, she dreams of collaborating with brands like Nike, Red Bull and Converse. "I want to align passion with purpose."

Losing her father reshaped her outlook on life. "Strength is not loud or dramatic," she reflects. "It is quiet, consistent and rooted in love." The experience deepened her empathy for families facing illness. "It pushed me to live with intention."

If she could leave one message with her audience, it would be simple. "Your background, pain and fears do not disqualify you," Angelique says. "They prepare you. Your voice matters, your dreams are valid, and you are capable of far more than you think."

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#Inspire

Cover Model Chanel Rautenbach

Miss Global South Africa 2025/2026

When Chanel Rautenbach's name was called as Miss Global South Africa 2025/2026, she says everything around her seemed to pause. "It felt like time stood still for a second," Chanel recalls. "I was overwhelmed with gratitude, emotion and disbelief, but also an incredible sense of purpose."

For Chanel, stepping into the role is about far more than wearing a crown. "It's more than a title, it's a calling," she says. "I felt honoured to represent my country and deeply humbled to carry the hopes, dreams and spirit of South African women onto the global stage."

Chanel's pageant journey began in 2019, thanks to two people who believed in her before she believed in herself. "My mom and her hairdresser entered me into my first pageant," she explains. "I had no prior experience with pageantry or modelling, but that journey made me fall in love with the industry."

What drew Chanel to Miss Global South Africa was its focus on unity, empowerment and global connection. "It's not just about beauty, it's about purpose, leadership and representing something bigger than yourself," she says. "The opportunity to represent South Africa internationally made it even more meaningful."

Throughout her reign, Chanel says she is guided by three simple values: love, kindness and purpose. "Love reminds me to lead with compassion, kindness keeps me grounded and connected to others, and purpose gives direction to my journey," she says. During the competition, these values kept her steady. "I wanted to compete not just with strength, but with heart." The national competition was tough, filled with strong and inspiring finalists. Chanel focused on more than just her appearance. "My preparation went beyond the physical. It was mental, emotional and spiritual," she explains.

Discipline and confidence became daily habits. Advocacy and self-development were central to her growth. "I believe what helped me stand out was my authenticity and the intention behind everything I presented."

She also credits her fashion sense for giving her an extra edge. "I personally think my fashion sense gave me that edge of standing out at events, dinners or activities," she says with a smile. "I feel my best when dressed in a powerful outfit."

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Next year, Chanel will take to the international stage at Miss Global 2026 in Thailand.

Her excitement is clear. “I am beyond excited. Thailand is going to be an unforgettable experience,” she says. “I’m looking forward to cultural exchange, meeting incredible women from around the world and proudly showcasing the beauty, strength and diversity of South Africa.”

Chanel plans to bring a message of empowerment to the global stage. Her platform focuses on love, kindness and purposeful empowerment. “I want to inspire young women to embrace their worth, lead with integrity and understand that true beauty comes from the impact you create,” she says.

She has already taken action by launching her online mentorship programme, Walking Into Womanhood. “Through Walking Into Womanhood, I will be empowering my generation and the upcoming generation of women,” she explains. “I intend to use my voice to uplift communities, encourage confidence and remind people that kindness is powerful.”

Representing South Africa carries deep meaning for Chanel. “South Africa is a nation of diversity and unity,” she says. “I want the world to see a delegate who represents inclusivity, strength and hope, someone who carries the warmth and pride of the Rainbow Nation in everything she does.”

Balancing public appearances, preparation and personal life has required discipline. “It’s definitely a demanding journey, but I’m learning to manage it with structure and grace,” Chanel says. She is quick to thank those around her. “My family, mentors and community have been incredibly encouraging. That support keeps me grounded as I work toward Thailand.” The public response to her win has been overwhelming. “Community support has meant everything,” she says. “The love I’ve received reminds me that this journey isn’t mine alone. It belongs to everyone who believes in me.” She stays connected with her followers through Instagram and Facebook under chanel_rautenbach, where she shares updates and moments from her reign.

Like many young women, Chanel has faced self-doubt and pressure. “There were moments where I questioned myself,” she admits. “But every hurdle taught me humility and gratitude.” Those challenges strengthened her commitment to integrity and service. “They reminded me why I started, to grow, to serve and to lead with purpose.”

Miss Global’s focus on beauty with purpose resonates deeply with her. “It celebrates global ambassadorship,” she says. “South African delegates bring something unique. Our warmth, our cultural richness and our ability to rise with grace always leave an impression.”

As Thailand approaches, Chanel looks forward to the cultural celebrations, national costume presentation and building friendships with other queens. “Every part of the experience is an opportunity to grow and represent with pride,” she says.

For young South Africans who dream of following in her footsteps, Chanel offers simple advice. “Start where you are, believe in your potential and never underestimate the power of consistency,” she says. “Stay true to your values and don’t allow setbacks to define you. Pageantry is not about perfection, it’s about becoming the best version of yourself.”

When asked about the legacy she hopes to leave, Chanel’s answer is clear. “I hope to leave a legacy of love-led leadership,” she says. “I want my reign to be remembered not only for appearances or achievements, but for impact. Kindness and authenticity are the most powerful crowns we can wear.”

Hair: @carltonhairsa
Makeup: @artistrybytwanet
Dress: New Romantics couture
Photographer: @bjornsmit.photoandfilm

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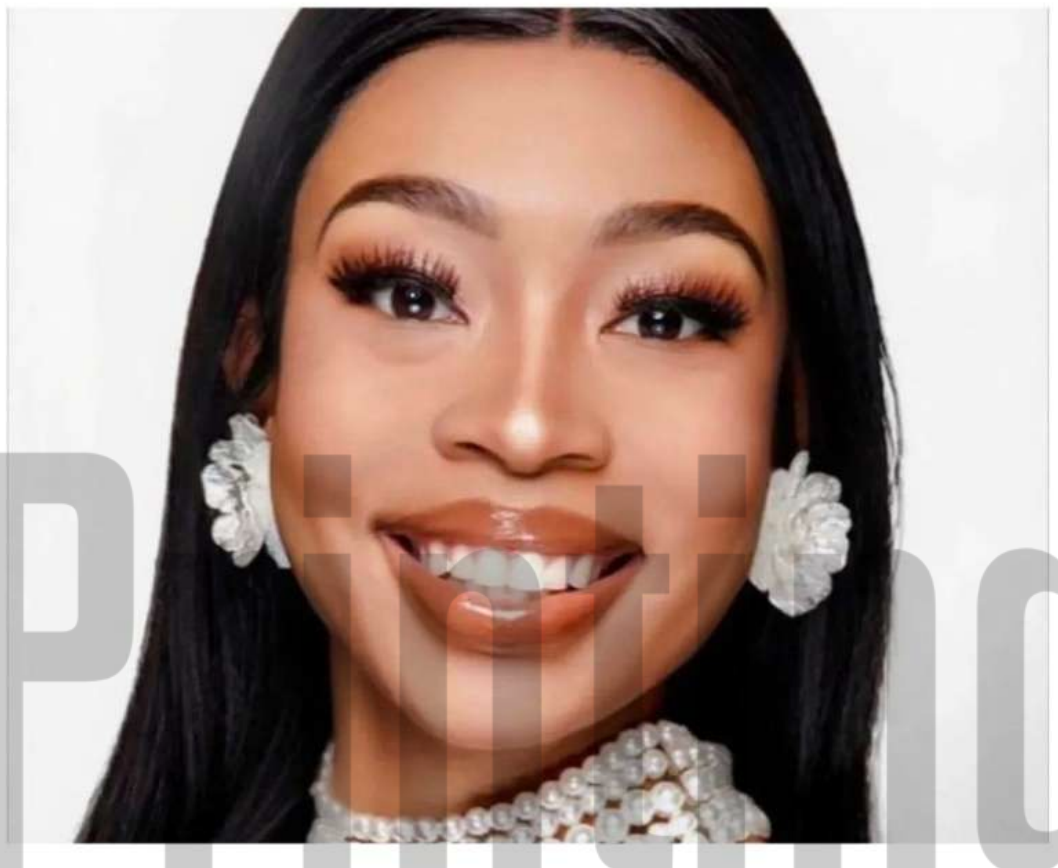

Reshoketsoe Monare

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#Pageant

Meet Reshoketsoe Halle Monare

Royal International Miss South Africa 2025/26

Reshoketsoe Halle Monare still remembers sitting in front of the television as a little girl, completely fascinated by the glitz of pageantry. “I was obsessed with Toddlers and Tiaras,” Reshoketsoe says with a laugh. “At first it was all about the pretty dresses, sparkles and crowns.” What started as childhood admiration slowly grew into something much deeper.

When she finally entered her first pageant, she walked straight onto a national stage with no coach and no experience. She did not place, but she walked away changed. “I knew this dream was bigger than me. It was for the little Reshoketsoe and for young girls from my township who felt like they couldn’t do it.”

Growing up shy and reserved, Reshoketsoe says pageantry helped her step out of her comfort zone. “I was very much in my own bubble, but pageantry gave me a platform to stand tall and believe my voice mattered,” she explains. “I didn’t just gain confidence, I gained purpose.” That sense of purpose would later shape every decision she made.

Her breakthrough came when she won Miss Teen South Africa 2022 and Miss Teen Universe South Africa 2022 under Pageants SA. After many disappointments, those titles felt deeply personal. “I had faced so many rejections that I started questioning whether pageantry was meant for me,” Reshoketsoe admits.

“Those crowns were confirmation. They reminded me that rejection is only redirection.” During her reign, she made one of the biggest decisions of her life: starting her non-profit organisation, the Shoki M Foundation. “That was when I stopped looking for validation and started walking in purpose,” she says.

With more than 90 local and national titles to her name, Reshoketsoe’s journey has not been without challenges. “Comparison was one of my biggest battles,” she says. “You’re surrounded by strong, beautiful, accomplished women, and it’s easy to feel like you’re not enough.” Learning to focus on her own path changed everything. “I had to understand that my journey is mine alone.” She also learned to face rejection head-on. “I heard ‘no’ more than ‘yes,’ but each no built me. It pushed me closer to what was meant for me.”

Representing South Africa in the Philippines was another defining moment. “It felt surreal,” she says. “One moment I was just a girl with a dream, the next I was on an international stage with my country’s name on my sash.” The experience pushed her to grow beyond fear. “I reminded myself I was there to represent home, not to be perfect.” More than stage confidence, the trip gave her a deeper sense of self. “I learned I don’t have to shrink to fit in globally. I can stand tall as an African woman and be enough.”

Later this year, she will represent South Africa again, this time in the United States. She feels more prepared than ever. “I’m going as a more evolved version of myself,” she says. “I understand the responsibility and the privilege now.” She looks forward to more than just competition. “I’m excited about the conversations, the connections, and sharing my story with confidence.”

Her recent titles, including Miss Teen Independent International 2025 and Royal International South Africa 2025/26, reflect her continued growth. “Wearing a crown is about responsibility and impact,” she says. “These titles show how far I’ve come, not just as a queen but as a young woman still learning and growing.” Representation remains close to her heart. “If a young girl can look at me and see possibility, then every step has been worth it.”

Reshoketsoe also served as New Romantics Ambassador 2024, a role she says felt natural after years of working with the brand. “It’s not just about looking good, it’s about feeling good too,” she explains. “Confidence is about how you carry yourself and how you speak about yourself.” Pageantry, she says, gave her a voice she once struggled to use. “In school I was terrified of speaking in front of people. My voice would shake,” she recalls. “Now I stand on stages by choice. Pageantry forced me to face that fear.”

Through the Shoki M Foundation, Reshoketsoe focuses on practical youth empowerment. One birthday stands out. “Instead of just celebrating, we partnered with M Powerment Cares NPC and gave back to the community,” she says. They donated essentials, mentored families, and even helped with home repairs. “Empowerment is about meeting real needs.”

As director of Mr and Miss Star of Gauteng, she now mentors others from behind the scenes. “I wanted to create a safe, empowering space,” she says. “Watching contestants find their voice is more fulfilling than competing.”

Her message to young people is simple. “Not everyone will understand your dreams, and that’s okay,” she says. “Self-belief means backing yourself when no one else does.”

Looking ahead, Reshoketsoe dreams of growing her foundation into a movement that equips young people with practical skills. “We can’t always wait for opportunities. Sometimes we have to create them,” she says. Above all, she hopes her journey reminds others that where you start does not limit where you can go. “You don’t have to wait for permission to become everything you’re meant to be.”

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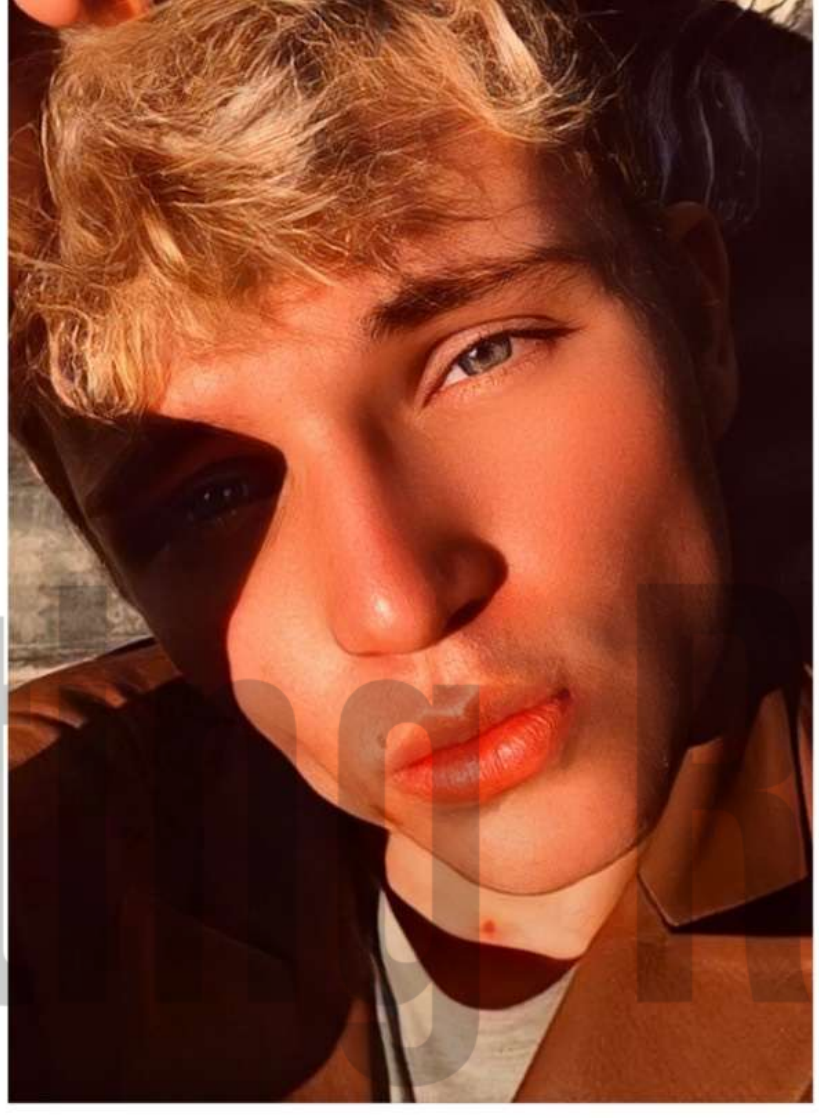
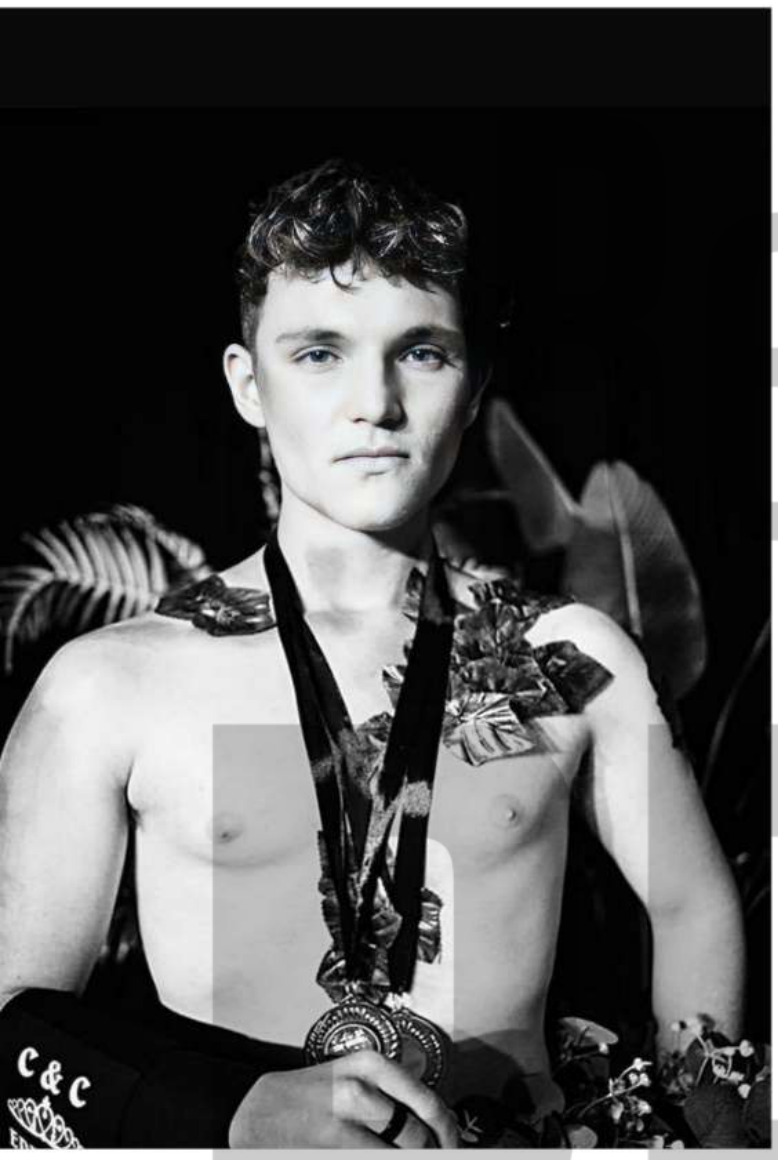
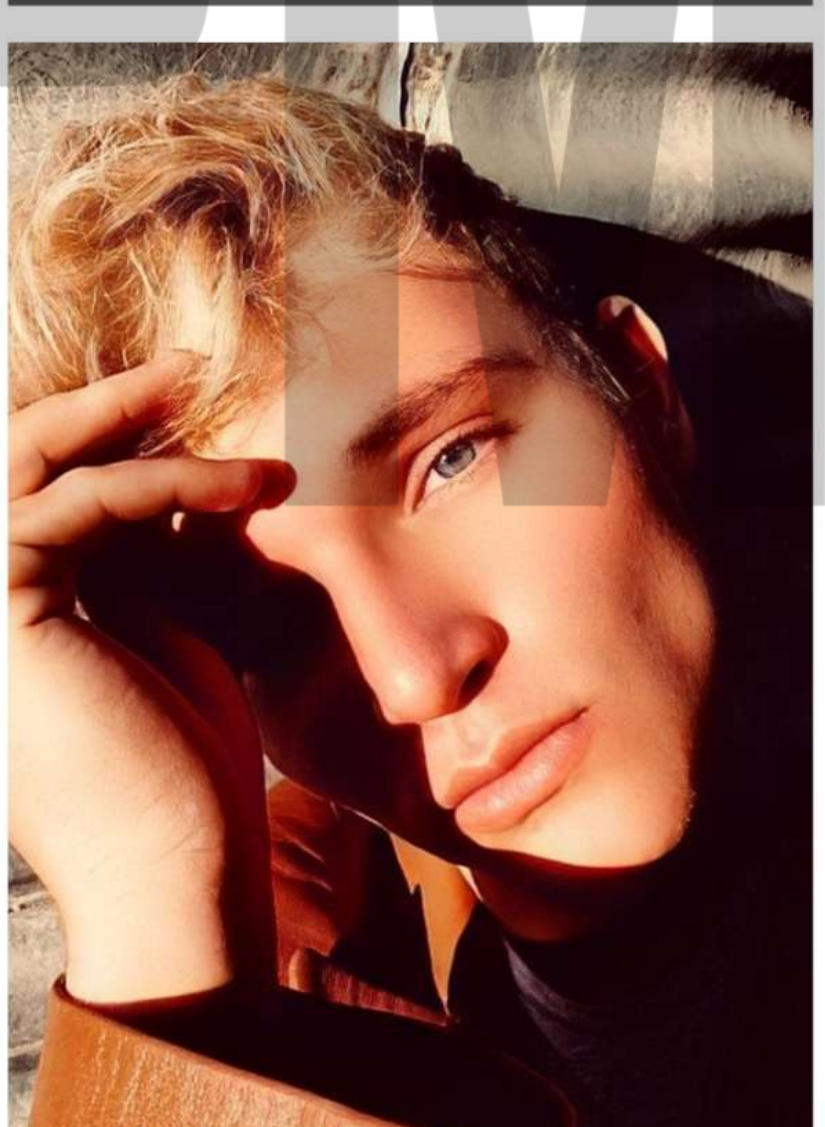




Louw Swart

Mr. Eden SA
2025
18+ Winner



#Pageant

Interview with Louw Zwart

Mr. Eden SA 2025 18+ Winner

Louw Zwart speaks with calm focus when talking about his journey, but there is no mistaking the pride behind his words. After earning multiple titles at the Eden SA Pageants and the Eden SA Top Model competition, Louw is stepping confidently into a future that is quickly expanding beyond local stages.

“Winning multiple titles was overwhelming in the best way possible,” Louw says. “Each title felt like validation of the hard work, discipline, and self-belief I’ve put into my journey. It wasn’t just about winning — it was about growth and being recognized for consistency and passion.”

Among his achievements are Mr 18+ Eden SA, Eden SA Top Model, Mr Photogenic, Mr Face of Eden, and Mr Valentine. While each title holds special meaning, one stands above the rest.

“Eden SA Top Model means the most to me,” Louw explains. “It represents versatility, professionalism, and readiness for the modeling industry. That title helped shift my focus strongly toward commercial and fashion modeling.”

That shift is already shaping his future. Louw is set to compete at New York Fashion Week in 2027, a major international platform that will introduce him to a faster, more demanding side of the industry.

“International platforms like New York Fashion Week operate at a much faster pace and higher standard,” he says. “Locally, competitions focus more on personality and presentation, while internationally it’s about precision, adaptability, and professionalism. I see it as an opportunity to challenge myself on a global level.”

Before that, another milestone is waiting. Louw was recently scouted for Mister Global South Africa 2026, a moment he still describes with disbelief. “I was honestly shocked and extremely grateful,” he says with a smile. “Being scouted rather than applying made it even more meaningful. It showed me that my work is being noticed and that I’m moving in the right direction.”

Behind the titles and big announcements is a steady routine built on preparation. Louw approaches each competition with a clear plan for both body and mind.

“Physically, I focus on fitness, grooming, posture, and runway training,” he says. “Mentally, I work on discipline, confidence, and staying grounded. I remind myself of my purpose and focus on progress instead of pressure.”

For Louw, the journey is not about collecting crowns but about constant improvement. “My motivation comes from growth,” he explains. “Every competition teaches me something new and pushes me to improve. I don’t see titles as the end goal — they’re stepping stones.”

When asked about the most memorable moment so far, his answer comes quickly. “Winning Eden SA Top Model stands out the most,” Louw says. “It marked a turning point where I truly started seeing myself as a professional model, not just a competitor.”

Balancing a growing modeling career with school and personal life is not easy, but Louw has learned to manage his time carefully. “It takes planning and discipline,” he says. “I prioritize my education, manage my time carefully, and make sure I still have space for family and personal life. Balance is challenging, but it’s essential.”

While he does not name one specific role model, Louw is clear about the kind of example he admires. “I’m inspired by individuals who build long-term careers, stay humble, and use their platforms with purpose — not just for titles, but for impact,” he says. Winning Eden SA Top Model has already changed how he sees himself and how others in the industry see him. “It gave me credibility and confidence,” Louw explains. “It opened doors and showed agencies and brands that I’m serious about modeling and ready for professional opportunities.”

Confidence, he believes, is the foundation of everything he does on stage and on the runway. “Confidence is believing in yourself even while you’re still growing,” he says. “In pageants and modeling, confidence is everything — it influences how you walk, speak, and present yourself.”

The benefits of competition have also carried into his everyday life. “I’ve gained public speaking skills, time management, discipline, networking, and self-confidence,” Louw says. “These skills help me in school and everyday life.”

He is especially passionate about encouraging young people who feel unsure about entering the modeling or pageant world. “Don’t wait until you feel ready — start now,” he advises. “Everyone feels intimidated at first. Confidence is built through experience and consistency.”

Looking ahead, Louw’s goals stretch far beyond local titles. “I see myself established in commercial and fashion modeling, representing South Africa on international platforms, and inspiring young people from smaller towns like Otjiwarongo to believe in their potential,” he says.

With his steady mindset and growing list of achievements, Louw is proving that success in modeling is not just about appearance, but about discipline, vision, and the courage to keep stepping forward.

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Mieke Nell

Instagram: @_xx.mieke.xx_

At just 16 years old, Mieke Nell from Ballito, KwaZulu-Natal, is already making waves in the modelling world. She is currently serving her year as Miss North Coast Teen, a title she proudly won in October 2025, and she is now a finalist in the Durban Model Search 2026.

“I felt so grateful and honestly a little overwhelmed when I found out I was a Durban Model Search 2026 finalist,” Mieke says. “At first, I couldn’t believe it, and then I felt really thankful for the opportunity. There are so many beautiful and talented finalists, and it’s such an honour to stand alongside them.”

Mieke describes herself as caring, level-headed, and grounded. She says she loves meeting and learning about people from all kinds of backgrounds and that kindness and humility are important wherever people come together. “I always try to handle things with understanding and empathy,” she adds.

Her decision to enter the Durban Model Search competition was driven by a desire to challenge herself. “I wanted to step out of my comfort zone. It felt like the perfect chance to grow, get some experience, and show what authenticity really means. To me, the competition is not just about how you look. It’s about confidence, character, putting yourself out there, and just being yourself.”

Mieke’s journey into modelling has been personal and meaningful. “It started as a way to build confidence, but over time it became so much more. I’ve learned the importance of believing in yourself, staying consistent, giving back, and being resilient.

Modelling has taught me to embrace my individuality, feel comfortable in my own skin, and carry myself with confidence and humility. It’s about so much more than what I see in the mirror. Every experience has helped me grow, not just in front of the camera, but as a person.” For Mieke, the most exciting part of the competition has been her growth both personally and creatively. “Every stage pushes you out of your comfort zone, introduces you to some seriously inspiring people, and teaches you things you never expected. Being surrounded by so many driven, passionate, and talented girls makes you want to give your absolute best every single day.”

Of course, the journey hasn’t been without challenges. “The most challenging part has been pushing past self-doubt and really learning to believe in myself,” she says. “Stepping into something new and being in the spotlight can be scary, but it’s taught me so much about confidence.

Learning to trust my skills, stay focused, and keep showing up even when I’m nervous has been tough, but it’s also been the thing that’s helped me grow the most.”

#Finalist

Interview with Mieke Nell

Durban Model Search 2026 Finalist

Mieke also reflects on how the competition has helped her grow as a person. “It’s pushed me beyond my comfort zone, helped me believe in myself, and embrace who I am without comparing myself to anyone else. I’ve learned to carry myself with more confidence, face challenges with resilience, and trust my own voice. True confidence comes from growth, accepting yourself, and showing up.”

When it comes to her modelling goals, Mieke sees herself mostly in editorial work. “I love the creativity, storytelling, and artistic expression it allows,” she says. “That said, I’m also open to runway, commercial, and pageant modelling. Each area has unique opportunities to grow and learn new skills. It’s all about exploring different opportunities, building experience, and figuring out where I can make the biggest impact while staying true to who I am.”

Mieke credits her success to the support of her family and mentor. “My biggest supporters have been my parents, my family, and my model coach. My parents and family have always encouraged me to follow my dreams. My model coach, Mrs. Katryn Celliers, saw potential in me when I saw nothing, and for that, I will forever be grateful. Their belief in me has made this whole experience so much more meaningful and inspiring.”

She has also learned valuable lessons about the modelling industry. “It’s not just about looks. Confidence, adaptability, discipline, and professionalism are just as important. The industry is creative and collaborative, and it’s about learning, growing, and supporting each other. People often have stereotypes about modelling, like it’s all glamour or easy, but that’s definitely not true. It takes a lot of hard work, dedication, and heart.”

Before a big casting, shoot, or runway walk, Mieke prepares both mentally and physically. “I make sure I’m well-rested, hydrated, and have gone over any notes or directions. Mentally, I visualise myself performing well, staying calm, and enjoying the moment. I also practice my walk, poses, and expressions. If I trip over my own feet in the mirror a few times, I just laugh and remind myself even professional models have their ‘graceful’ bloopers!”

What makes her stand out among other finalists is her authenticity, compassion, and versatility. “I try to bring a genuine approach to everything I do, whether it’s connecting with people, adapting to different styles, or embracing challenges.

I also love community work and volunteering, especially with children from rural areas, which has taught me so much about empathy and giving back. I’m eager to learn, willing to step outside my comfort zone, and committed to giving my best in every opportunity.”

Looking ahead, Mieke says winning Durban Model Search 2026 would open doors for her career. “It would give me exposure, experience, and the chance to learn from industry professionals. More importantly, it would allow me to grow, challenge myself, and inspire others by showing that dedication, authenticity, and confidence can open doors. It would be the start of an exciting chapter where I can pursue my passion while representing myself and the causes I care about.”

Her biggest dream is to work on high-fashion editorial campaigns while exploring all kinds of modelling. “I want to express creativity, inspire others, and show that celebrating diversity and being authentic is just as important as looks. I hope to build a career that pushes me, helps me grow, and leaves a positive mark.”

To young people nervous about entering competitions, Mieke has simple advice: “Just go for it! Nerves are normal, but the experience is way more exciting than the fear. Step out of your comfort zone, believe in yourself, and treat every challenge as a chance to grow.

Even if things don’t go perfectly, you’ll gain confidence, new skills, and memories that will stick with you forever. Trust yourself and enjoy the journey — that’s where all the magic happens. And hey, a little sparkle never hurts!”

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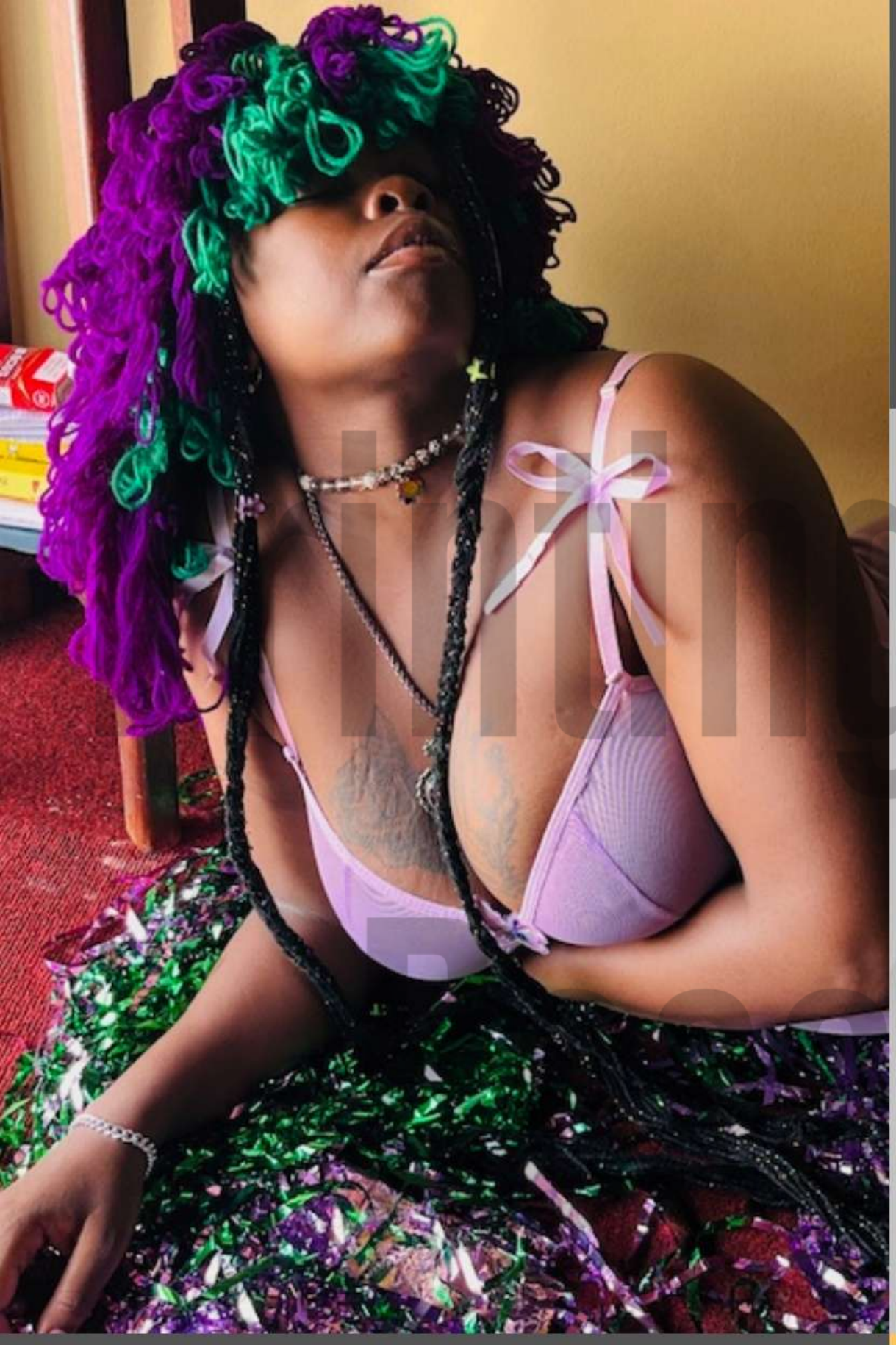

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MBALI BLOM AKA
IMZIMBALI

Beats, Blooming Dreams,
and Bold Purpose

#Music

Meet Mbali Blom aka ImZimbali

Musician, Songwriter, Composer & Performer

A story by: Etaiya Briscoe

Mbali speaks about music with the kind of certainty that makes you sit up and listen. The Katlehong-born artist, also known as ImZimbali, carries her story with pride, shaped by culture, family, and a deep belief in where she is headed. Still in her twenties, Mbali is focused, independent, and clear about her purpose.

"I have no other choice but to make it into the music industry," she says. "I'm doing this for the young girls who look up to me and for my family who invested so much in shaping me into the woman I am today."

Raised in a creative Xhosa household on her mother's side, Mbali says art was never far from her daily life. Music, especially, felt natural. "I love music, and coming from a family with a creative background made me more in sync with it," she explains. That early exposure helped her develop not only confidence but also a strong sense of identity that now carries through her sound.

Mbali describes her style as "ZappySoundZ," a name that reflects her versatility. While she experiments across styles, amapiano holds a special place in her heart. "My favourite genre is amapiano, a proudly South African sound made from the neighbourhood I'm from," she says. "Katlehong and the township inspire me a lot." For Mbali, the beat-driven genre is more than a trend. It is a reflection of home, energy, and lived experience.

Her creative process is flexible but always personal. "Usually I write on beats," Mbali says. "Unless I have a specific song that comes to mind, then I record it as a voice note or write the lyrics in my memo." Inspiration comes from everyday life, both close to home and further out in the world. "I sing about what happens in my life and in the world in general. It should be relatable and vibey," she adds.

While the music may sound effortless, Mbali is honest about the hard work behind the scenes. She is fully independent and funds her own journey. "Investing in my career is a lot of money," she says. "I'm working on building a team or getting a publishing deal that is legit." For now, she wears many hats, balancing her music with other work, including her role as a radio host at Hillbrow Radio on The Brunch Show. The platform allows her to grow her voice in more ways than one. "It's for knowledge and means," she says simply.

Her dedication has already earned recognition. Mbali received a Youth Excellency Legacy Award from the City of Ekurhuleni in the Arts and Culture category. It is a moment she holds close, not just as a personal win but as proof that her efforts are being seen. Still, awards are not what drive her most.

Mbali's connection with her supporters is one of the things she speaks about with the biggest smile. She calls her fans "FLOWERZ." "We stay blooming," she explains. "When I drop new music and share posts, it feels like I'm watering and feeding them. I love them." The name reflects the nurturing energy she believes music can bring. At the core of Mbali's journey is a strong message for young people, especially girls. "Self-love, awareness, and expression are a huge part of life," she says. She also has a message for parents. "Support your babies. Never give up on them." It is advice drawn from her own experience of being supported and encouraged to follow her gifts.

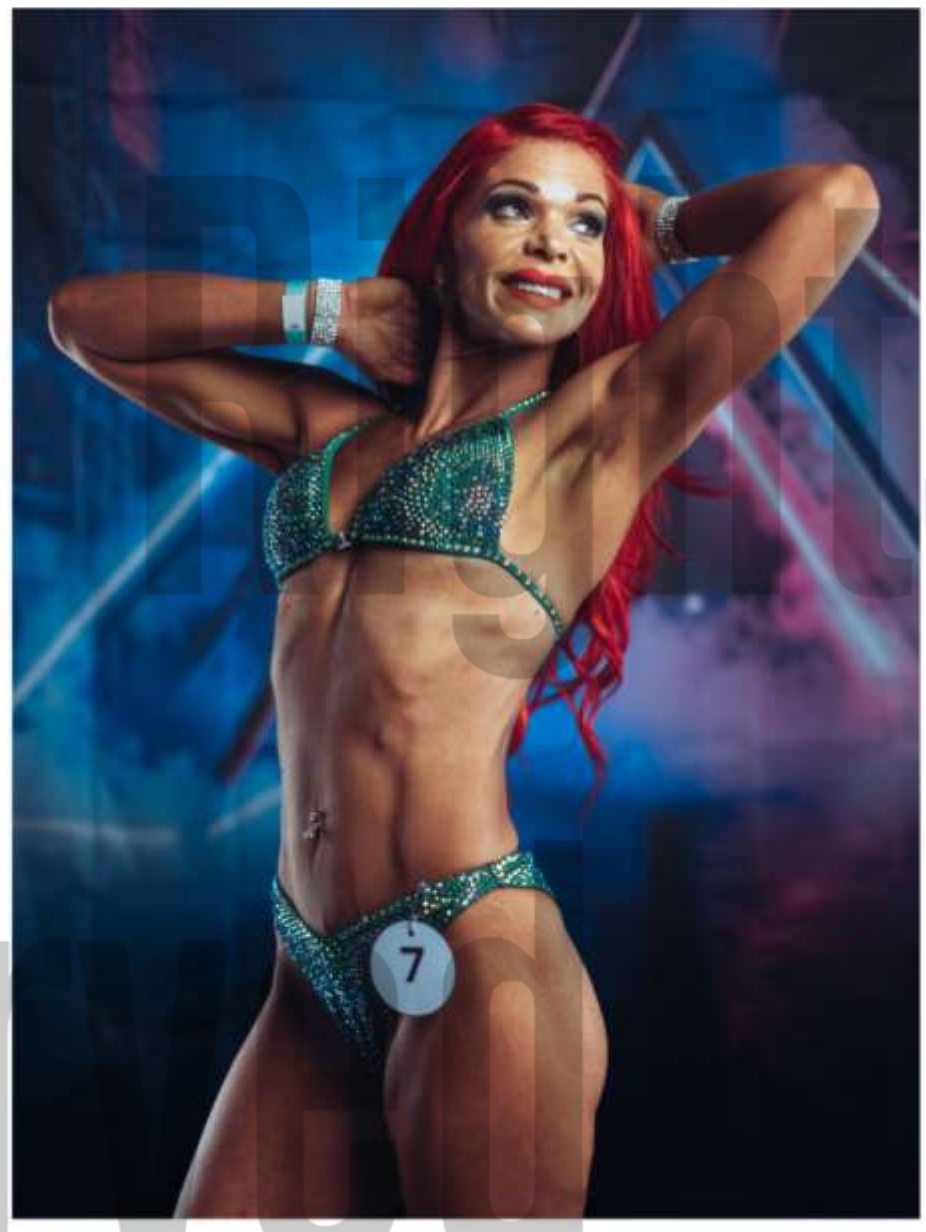
When asked what keeps her going during difficult moments, Mbali answers from the heart. "The heart doesn't quit because it never lies and knows what it wants," she says. That belief fuels her big dreams. She openly speaks about wanting to work with major artists. "I manifest Nasty C, Cassper, Shekhinah, Nicki, and Beyoncé," she says with a laugh that carries both hope and confidence.

For Mbali, success is bigger than fame or numbers. She sees it as something that should ripple outward. "My success is not only mine," she says. "The whole world will benefit financially, emotionally, and mentally." It is an ambitious vision, but one that fits the way she talks about her music — as something meant to connect, uplift, and remind people of their own worth.

With her roots in Katlehong, her culture in her voice, and her eyes firmly on the future, Mbali is building her path one beat, one lyric, and one blooming FLOWERZ at a time.

Reserved

Ananda Van Den Berg



Fitness Model

#Fitness

Introducing Ananda Van Den Berg

Strength, Discipline, and Stage Confidence

Ananda started competing in fitness competitions in June 2025, but her journey began long before she ever stepped onto a stage. When she talks about her decision to compete, there is a calm confidence in her voice. “I just knew I wanted to challenge myself,” she says. “I wanted to see what I am capable of.”

Ananda competes in the Bikini and Glamor categories, divisions that demand not only physical conditioning but also poise and stage presence. Behind the sparkle and stage lights is a strict routine that requires discipline every single day. “I do cardio five days a week from 5am to 6am,” she explains. “Then I do weight training from 7am to 8am every day.” In total, she trains about 10 hours a week.

Her mornings start before most people are awake. At Revive Gym in Noordheuwel, Ananda follows a structured plan designed by her coach, Yolandie Botha. “My coach adjusts my diet according to the goals we are working towards,” Ananda says. “Currently we are in prep for a competition in May, so it is a high-protein diet and staying in a calorie deficit.”

Cardio is never boring. “One day it is Tabata, the next day steps, then HIIT training, boxing, or dance fit,” Ananda says with a smile. “She is absolutely brilliant at keeping us motivated and making exercise exciting.” The variety keeps her focused, especially during the long weeks of preparation.

Nutrition plays a central role in Ananda’s success. During competition season, everything is measured and planned. “On season it is very strict. You have to remain within your calories and macros as determined by my coach,” she explains. Off season allows a little more flexibility. “We try our best to maintain and build a little bit, so we increase calories slightly.”

The hardest part of contest prep, however, is not the early mornings or the strict meals. “Definitely the water drop before a competition,” Ananda admits. “I normally drink a lot of water, so that last week when you can only have a little bit is very difficult for me.” It is a mental and physical challenge that tests even the most determined athletes.

Ananda has competed in three competitions so far, and each one holds a special place in her heart. She competed in Divas for the IBFF and placed second in her very first competition. “It gave me the drive to continue my journey,” she says proudly. She later competed at Gym Angels for the UIBFF, where she placed fifth out of about 24 athletes. That competition was a turning point for her confidence.

“Backstage, waiting to go up, I looked around at the other girls and thought they are sending you off stage today,” she recalls honestly. “I felt like I was probably double the size compared to the rest of the girls. Mentally this sport is hard.” When she placed fifth, it changed something inside her. “Looking back at the photos, I realized how tough I was on myself. My belief in myself really needed work.”

When asked who inspires her most in the fitness industry, Ananda does not hesitate. “Definitely my coach, Yolandie,” she says. “My journey would not have been possible without her.” She describes Yolandie as someone who leads with motivation and love. “She pushes when she needs to and wipes away tears when frustration gets in the way.” Ananda admits that the gym once felt like a scary place. “Now it feels like home. It is a place where I feel safe and supported.”

Motivation during tough prep days comes from a deeper place. “My kids deserve the best version of me,” Ananda says. “But I also owe it to myself to be the best version of me.” She believes many women, especially mothers, forget to choose themselves.

“We are quick to do everything for everyone else. I made myself choose myself now and again. I am not only a business owner, partner, or mother. I am a woman, and I deserve to give myself the best as well.” In terms of supplements, Ananda keeps it simple and consistent. “Definitely magnesium, BCAA, a multivitamin, calcium, and zinc,” she says. These support her demanding training schedule and recovery process.

Competing has changed her body confidence in a powerful way, although she admits the journey is ongoing. “Massively,” she says. “Although I still see the fat kid in the mirror sometimes.” The nature of the sport can be unforgiving. “You have one day in prep where you look perfect or close to it, and the next day it is gone. Then putting on your size 6 jeans feels like you are putting on a size 40.”

Still, she has learned to embrace the full journey. “You try your best to believe in yourself and the process. The people I have met through competing have been so supportive and encouraging. That makes a huge difference.” Ananda’s next big goal is clear. “My next competition is on the 30th of May for UIBFF,” she says. “My goal is to look at least 25 percent better than I did at my previous show.” For her, improvement is personal. It is about growth, not comparison.

For anyone thinking about stepping into the world of fitness competitions, Ananda offers simple advice. “Embrace every aspect. Laugh, cry, take a day when you feel down, but never give up on yourself. Trust your coach and trust the process.”

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Madelaine

Faith, Courage, and Glamour Illuminate a Survivor's Journey on the Mrs. Opulent Stage

Facebook: Madelaine Snyman
Instagram: @madelaine_snyman
TikTok: Madelaine Snyman
Brand Ambassador: Lee Cooper SA
& Asteria Group Holdings

#Opulent

Introducing Madelaine Snyman

Mrs. Opulent 2025 Finalist / Ambassador

Madelaine Snyman, a vibrant soul and cancer survivor, stepped into the spotlight of the Mrs Opulent Category with a heart full of gratitude and a spirit grounded in faith. As a devoted wife to Willem Snyman, owner of Heck Yes Makeup Artistry, and an ambassador for multiple brands like MatlaABana Funky Socks Day and Nails of Note Fourways, Madelaine's life is a whirlwind of passion and purpose. She's also a co-presenter for Sterstatus Season 6 and now a judge for Season 7. But it was her walk on the Mrs Opulent stage that became a defining moment, one she describes with awe and joy.

"That first step was surreal," Madelaine recalls. "Everything went into slow motion, like a moment of pure silence. I looked up, saw thousands of spectators, and my heart was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude." For her, it was a moment to breathe in faith and exhale doubt. "Time isn't refundable," she says, "so I used it with intention."

Walking that runway for the first time, Madelaine soaked it all in. "I tried to take photos with my mind," she says, "because I wanted to bottle that feeling forever." She felt proud and blessed, seeing the experience as part of her journey of growth and reinvention. "It was an extraordinary opportunity," she adds, her voice brimming with sincerity. Madelaine's gown, designed by the talented Dinma Kod, was a showstopper. "Dinma is such a beautiful soul," Madelaine says. "Her craftsmanship showed in every detail of those exquisite vanguard dresses with a sea theme, all in gold." The intricate, glamorous designs made Madelaine feel "beautiful and feminine," boosting her confidence as she strutted down the runway. "Dinma's work was a glamorous statement," she says, "and I felt like it carried me."

The glam team played a huge role in bringing Madelaine's vision to life. "I felt like a celebrity," she laughs, crediting JU Quillage SA, Phoera Cosmetics, and Brandon Walt Beauty for her striking look.

They gave her a smokey eye that she loves—"because you can see someone's soul through their eyes"—and CSH Springs the Apprentice styled her hair in a sleek ponytail to highlight the high, bejeweled neck of her dress. A spray tan from Zillet Beauty Co. completed the transformation. "I felt like a golden goddess," Madelaine says, beaming. "That team was so talented, and I was so thankful."

Working with photographers was another highlight. "They were professional, talented, and always friendly," she says. "They captured this extraordinary moment as a reminder of our bravery." Each click of the camera preserved a memory Madelaine holds dear.

So, what inspired Madelaine to enter Mrs Opulent in the first place? "You see all these incredible, talented, beautiful models, and you never think you're ready," she admits. But when Johan Ungerer chose her as a wildcard earlier this year, she was humbled and decided to seize the moment. "I gave it my all," she says. "Growth happens right on the edge of what we think we can't do." Her faith in God guided her, as she felt blessed for the opportunity.

Balancing competition prep with her busy life wasn't easy, but Madelaine had a rock in her husband, Willem. "I'm blessed with a great husband who supported me all the way," she says. "He helped with chores so I could focus on preparing to be my best." One backstage moment stands out above the rest: spotting Willem in the crowd. "Seeing him waving at me with a big smile, taking photos—it was priceless," she says. "Having someone cheer you on, proud of you, loving you unconditionally… I'll cherish that forever."

The journey wasn't without challenges. Surrounded by talented models, Madelaine leaned on her faith to stay grounded. "I focused on Jesus, reconditioned my mind, and stirred up the seeds of greatness," she says. "You don't let others set your limits. You're chosen, equipped, and blessed." Her mantra? Stay pure and genuine, and run your own race.

Competing taught Madelaine to see herself through God's eyes. "Trust in Him, stay humble, and be kind," she says. "You don't know what someone else is enduring." She learned to embrace her unique path, knowing her blessings are meant for her alone. "It's not where you've been, but how far you've come and where you're going," she adds.

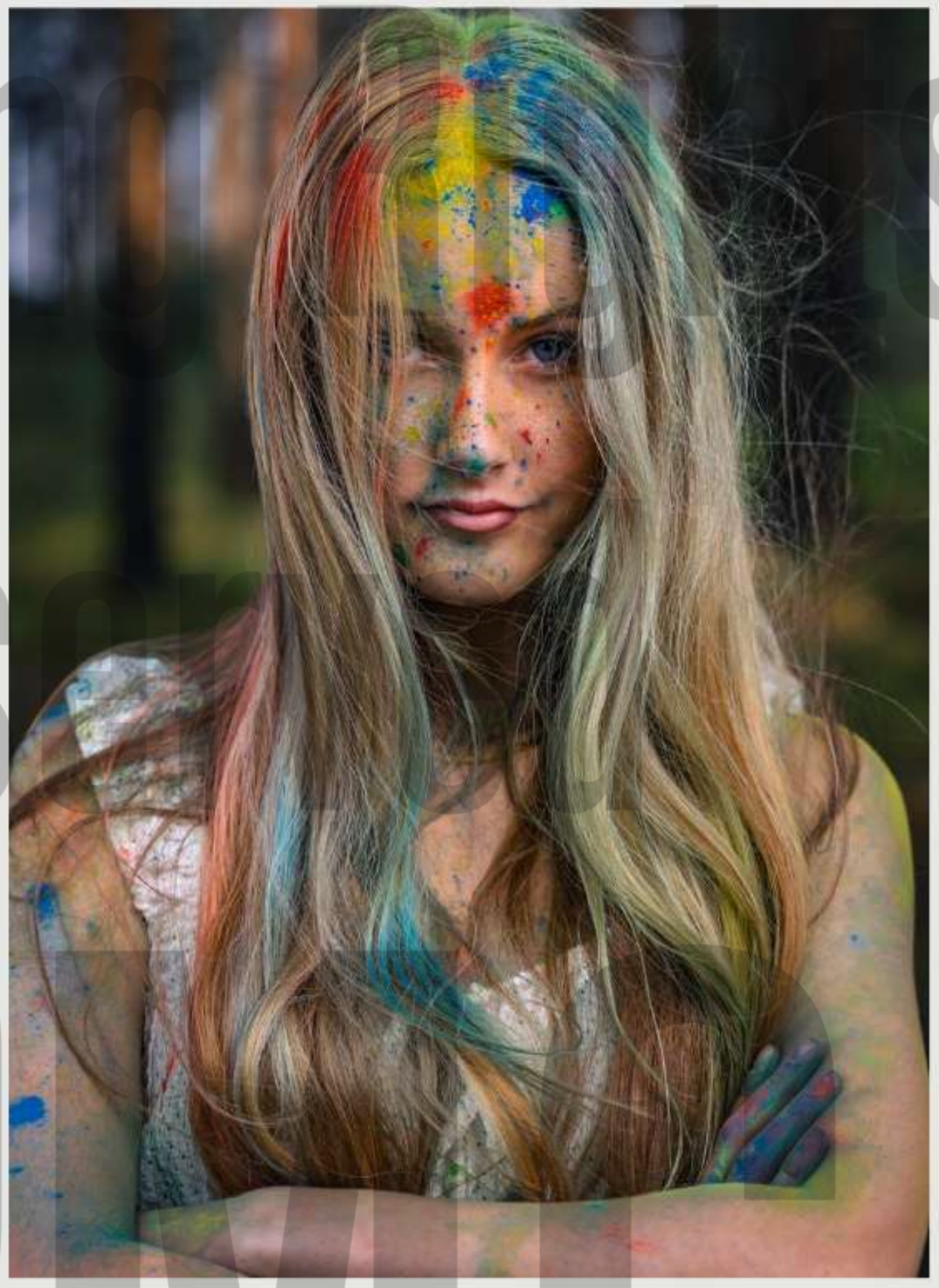
For Madelaine, true beauty is internal. "I admire women who are beautiful from within," she says. "Humble, kind, supportive women who make you feel accepted and worthy—that's rare in big competitions." Her advice to future Mrs Opulent hopefuls? "It's an unforgettable journey on an international level," she says. "You're competing with the best models, so your mindset must be positive, your faith strong. Show up as the best version of yourself, ready physically and emotionally. It'll rock your world."

Madelaine's story is one of faith, courage, and glamour—a reminder to chase dreams with heart and trust in the journey ahead.

PPMC MAGAZINE

JOHAN UNGERER SIGNATURE EVENTS

DONNÉ VENTER

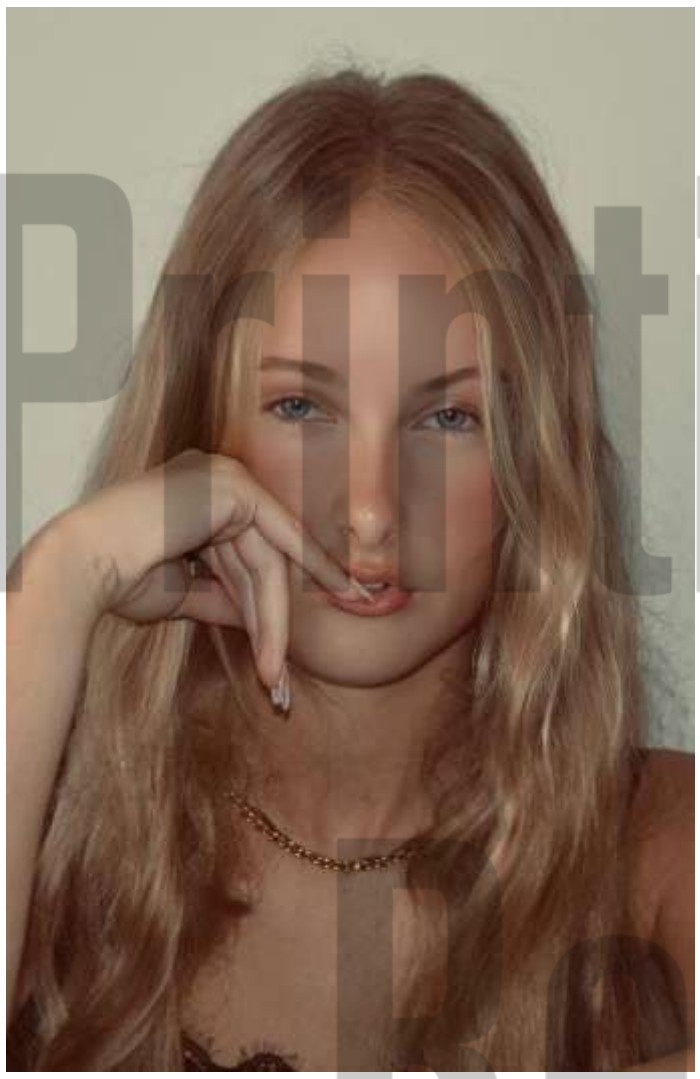


Donné is stepping confidently into the spotlight as a Durban Model Search 2026 finalist, determined to turn her passion for modeling into a platform for growth and inspiration.

#Finalist

Interview with Donné Venter

Durban Model Search 2026 Finalist



At just 16 years old, Donné from Hillcrest, KwaZulu-Natal, is already making her mark in the modeling world. A finalist in the Durban Model Search 2026, she's excited about the opportunity to grow and shine on a professional platform.

"I was so excited to hear about being a finalist in Durban Model Search," Donné says. "I feel this is a professional platform to gain exposure in this industry."

Donné describes herself as a typical teenage girl with a passion for beauty, healthcare, fashion, and the latest trends. But beyond her interests, she is known for her soft heart and her desire to make those around her happy. "I'm always trying to make people feel happy," she says, "and that's just part of who I am."

Her journey into modeling has not been without challenges. "This has been the most challenging part of my journey—finding the correct avenues and the correct 'doors'," she explains. "There are so many beautiful young ladies with the same dream, so the competition is tough." Despite the challenges, modeling has helped Donné grow in ways she never imagined. "I was a very shy little girl, but this experience has helped me finally accept my individuality and uniqueness. I've learned to love myself more," she shares. Her journey has also made her want to inspire others. "I would love to share with other young ladies how modeling can help one grow," she adds.

When asked about her favorite parts of the competition, Donné lights up. "I love photographic modeling, castings, shoots, as well as runway. Being in front of a camera or on stage, I somehow transform into a different, more confident person." She describes that transformation as freeing and empowering, a chance to step into a side of herself that she doesn't often show.

Donné sees her future in modeling as versatile. "I enjoy all aspects—runway, commercial, editorial, and pageant modeling," she says. "I love how I can adapt and transform depending on the look or the show." Her ability to shift and transform is what she believes sets her apart from other finalists. "I feel I have a natural look that can be 'glammed up,' and I can become the person who best represents the outfit, show, or casting," she says confidently.

Behind her success, Donné credits the support of her family and friends. "They've been my biggest supporters throughout this experience," she says. "Their encouragement keeps me motivated, even when things get tough."

Entering the modeling world has also opened Donné's eyes to its realities. "I've learned that the industry is very competitive, and exposure is everything. You need to work hard, be patient, and know where to find the right opportunities," she says. Preparation is key, she explains. "Before a big casting, shoot, or runway walk, I make sure I practice my poses, walk, and expressions. Being prepared helps me feel confident and focused."

If she were to win Durban Model Search 2026, Donné sees it as a major step forward. "It would give me the support I need for the exposure required in this industry," she says. For her, winning isn't just about the title—it's about gaining the tools and opportunities to further her career.

Looking ahead, Donné's biggest dream is clear: to become a recognized model who can inspire others. "I want to show young girls that you can follow your dreams, be confident in your individuality, and grow through experiences like this," she says.

Her advice to other young people considering competitions is heartfelt. "Don't hesitate, believe in yourself, take that chance. If you don't put yourself out there, you will never know, and you might regret it," she encourages.

For Donné, modeling is more than just a hobby—it's a journey of self-discovery, confidence, and opportunity. With her natural charm, adaptability, and determination, she's set to leave a mark in the industry. Durban Model Search 2026 might just be the first big step on a long and exciting path for this young talent from Hillcrest.

Preserved

VENIQUE BAILIE

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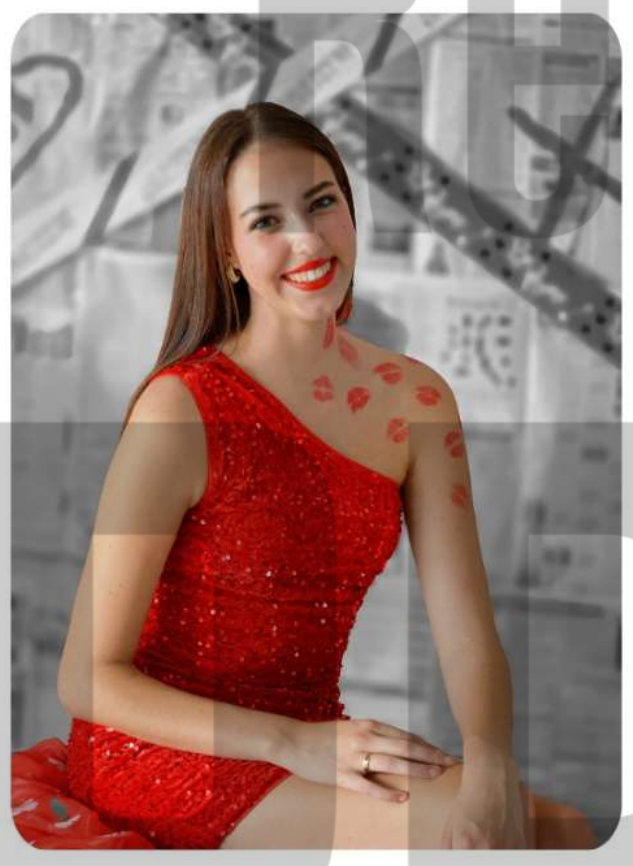

#Model

Interview with Venique Bailie

Confidence Rooted in Purpose and Faith

Venique grew up in Rustenburg as a young girl with big dreams and an imagination that stretched far beyond her surroundings. Long before she stepped onto a competitive stage, she found herself captivated by the women she watched at pageants and fashion events. “I was always drawn to the confidence and grace of women on stage,” Venique says. “Not just because they were beautiful, but because they carried themselves with purpose, strength, and courage.”

There was no single life-changing moment that pushed her into modeling. Instead, it was something quieter and more personal. “My family believed in me before I fully believed in myself,” she explains. “They saw potential in me, and their encouragement gave me the confidence to take my first step.” That first step, she says, became a journey of self-discovery. “Modeling and pageantry are not about perfection. They are about becoming the best version of yourself.”

Like any young woman chasing big dreams, Venique has faced moments of doubt. She speaks openly about the pressure that can come with competition. “There were times when I questioned whether I was enough,” she admits. In those seasons, three pillars kept her grounded: discipline, faith, and perseverance.

“My faith reminded me that I am created with purpose. Discipline taught me that success is built in the unseen hours — early mornings, practice sessions, and personal sacrifices. Perseverance showed me that rejection is not failure, but redirection.”

A major turning point came in 2022 when Venique won the North West category at Toddler and Tween of the World. Even though she was young, the victory left a deep impression. “Winning North West in 2022 is a moment I will always treasure,” she says. “It felt like confirmation that my dreams were possible.” More than the title itself, she values the lessons it brought. “It taught me preparation, courage, and self-belief. It planted a seed of confidence in me.”

Her growth continued at Globe Modellook Rustenburg, where she trained under Lizelle Jacobs and Zorina Homan. Venique credits the experience with shaping her both professionally and personally. “The most impactful lesson I’ve learned is professionalism with humility,” she says. “True confidence is a quiet strength. It doesn’t need to be loud to be powerful.” Through training, she learned discipline, poise, and the importance of choosing excellence daily. “Carrying yourself with grace creates opportunities,” she adds.

Major competitions have also played a role in refining her character. As a finalist in World Supermodel and Miss Teen SA, and later earning 1st Princess at Little Model Earth 2025, Venique was pushed beyond her comfort zone. Representing South Africa internationally was especially meaningful. “It was humbling and empowering at the same time,” she says. “It strengthened my confidence and gratitude.” Competing on bigger stages taught her an important truth. “Confidence is not about comparison. It’s about conviction and believing in who you are.”

Being crowned Miss Starlight Rustenburg 2025 as the Overall Winner brought her journey full circle. Winning in her hometown made the moment deeply personal. “Rustenburg is where my journey began,” Venique says. “Being recognized by my own community was incredibly emotional.” For her, the crown symbolized growth. “It wasn’t just about the title. It was about honoring the younger version of myself who once dreamed of standing on that stage.”

Venique also believes a crown carries responsibility. That belief is why the “Stay Alert, Stay Alive” commercial project meant so much to her. “I believe a crown represents responsibility, not just beauty,” she explains. “Using my voice to promote awareness and safety aligns with my values.” She is clear about her purpose. “True impact goes beyond the runway. It lives in the lives we touch.” Through pageantry, Venique has learned that inner beauty matters most. “True beauty is confidence rooted in kindness, compassion, and courage,” she says. “Titles can be won, but character must be built.” She credits her faith and family for keeping her grounded. “The glamour is temporary, but the impact we make in others’ lives is lasting.”

One of her biggest personal challenges has been comparison. In an industry filled with talented and beautiful young women, it can be easy to feel small. “Comparison steals joy and confidence,” Venique says honestly. “I realized I was never meant to be a copy. I was created to be original.” That lesson now shapes the message she shares with other girls: their uniqueness is their greatest strength.

Balancing school, training, and competitions requires careful planning. “Education remains my priority,” she says firmly. “Balance requires discipline and sacrifice.” There are late nights and early mornings, but she remains focused. “My faith gives me strength during overwhelming moments and reminds me that I am supported every step of the way.”

Representing South Africa internationally revealed something unexpected about herself. “I discovered a strength within myself I didn’t know existed,” she says. Adapting to new cultures and environments proved that she is capable of more than she once imagined.

Looking ahead, Venique’s dreams stretch far beyond crowns and sashes. “I hope to represent South Africa on global stages with excellence and integrity,” she says. More importantly, she wants to create platforms that empower young girls, especially those from small towns. “One day, I want to mentor young women and help them discover their confidence, purpose, and voice.”

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Unbound African Beauty

BONISIWE MAHLANGU

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#Finalist

Meet Bonisiwe “Siwe” Mahlangu

Limpopo Model Search 2026 Finalist

Bonisiwe “Siwe” Mahlangu, 28, from Bela-Bela, is turning heads in the Limpopo Model Search 2026. A writer and anthropologist, Siwe is passionate about cultural reformation and challenging the normalization of violence. But beyond her academic and activist work, she is making her mark in the modeling world with her striking features and magnetic presence. “I’m unbound, graceful, impactful,” she says. “I’m a true African beauty.”

When Siwe found out she was a finalist for the Limpopo Model Search, she admits she was caught off guard. “Surprised! I hadn’t thought much about it since applying, then the following day I opened my phone and found out I’m a finalist! It was exciting and gave me a fresh wind.”

Her decision to enter the competition came unexpectedly. “I was scrolling on Instagram and saw an advert for it. I haven’t been able to do any modeling for the past two years because of my location in Limpopo. There aren’t many casting agencies where I live. Seeing an ad targeting Limpopo people for modeling was so new and fresh to me I just went for it right away!”

Siwe’s modeling journey has been anything but straightforward. “I was scouted a few times when I was younger, but because of poor self-esteem, insecurities, and a rigid mindset, I never took the opportunities. Then one day my head cleared up, and I saw the sunshine. I tried to break into the industry, but moving to Bela-Bela put a bit of a snag on my plans. But I’m still here, and ready to go whenever the Universe opens the pen.”

So far, the competition has pushed her out of her comfort zone. “Putting myself out there and reaching out to people has been exciting. I’m usually quite self-sufficient and self-reliant. Even if I don’t know how to do things perfectly, I try to learn how to compensate as efficiently as possible. For this competition, I had to rely on friends, family, and community members to vote for me. Announcing my intentions and asking for help felt great, like exercising a muscle I don’t usually think about.”

Social media presented one of her biggest challenges. “I prefer to live without social media, but that’s where a lot of campaigning happens. I saw lots of other finalists with large accounts and thousands of followers. I thought it was over for me. But I did my best, campaigning in my community and on my WhatsApp status. I’ve found so much support from my community actively promoting for me and sending my campaign posters to people who know me from a distance. I was very surprised to find out I was doing well.”

The experience has also boosted her confidence. “Reaching out to people and not keeping things close to my chest has been eye-opening. Everyone has been so eager to support me. It feels like the people around me have been waiting for an opportunity to cheer me on. I’ve felt sincerely embraced by my community.”

When asked about her modeling ambitions, Siwe says she is open to every opportunity. “Runway, commercial, editorial, pageant—if the chance comes, I’ll take it.” She credits her community for keeping her motivated. “My cousin, my sister, friends, church members, classmates, coworkers, strangers online—I see you. I am so grateful for each person who voted for me or shared my poster or link. Thank you, thank you, thank you so much!”

Siwe’s entry into modeling at 28 is unusual, and she acknowledges the industry’s bias toward youth. “I thought the jig is up as soon as you turn 27. Not to say that it's completely false, but somehow I’ve found the tenacity to believe in myself against expectation.”

Her preparation for castings and shoots is simple: “I tell myself to have fun! One way or another, I have lost nothing if I make the most of the experience and embrace the moment with open arms.”

What makes her stand out, she believes, is her perspective. “As a neurodivergent Black South African woman, my path has been riddled with hurdles and barriers. Some would say I’m behind in life, venturing into modeling at 28. Personally, I see my journey as distinct from anyone else’s. When I bring my charismatic face in front of a camera, I bring years of experience, passion, and the ability to make the most of my circumstances. That’s my power.”

If she wins the Limpopo Model Search 2026, Siwe says it would be a huge step for her career. “It would help me chase my dream of getting paid for my beautiful face. It’s already been a confidence booster to get this far, and it would make me feel more capable of getting into an agency in the future despite my age.”

Her ultimate dream is to work with meaningful brands. “I would love to shoot for a skincare company like SKOON or Dermalogica. Their products helped me regain confidence in my beauty after a tough teenagerhood. I also want to work with green businesses that value sustainability and local brands. But my first and foremost dream is to book a gig. Any gig!”

For young people nervous about competitions, her advice is simple: “Just do it! Don’t think too hard. You’ve lost nothing. If you’re nervous, do it nervous! If you feel inadequate, do it inadequate! Just do it.”

Siwe’s journey reminds us that beauty, confidence, and ambition don’t come with an expiration date. Her story is proof that talent, community support, and determination can create new opportunities at any stage of life.

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#Talent

Interview with Savannah Whiting

Acting, Modeling and Makeup

Savannah Whiting describes herself as a South African and Portuguese-inspired model, makeup artist and actor, but those titles only begin to explain her creative drive. Savannah is warm, thoughtful and deeply passionate about storytelling. "My artistry is not just about aesthetics," Savannah says. "Every look I create tells a story."

For Savannah, modeling is more than standing in front of a camera. "It's about embodying emotion, culture and the narrative in every frame," she explains. She brings that same intention to every project and says she is excited to share her authentic energy with PPMC's magazine.

Savannah's journey into the creative world began with a quiet fascination for fashion. "I have always been interested in the fashion world but I never thought that modeling could be something that I do," Savannah admits. What started as an interest in photographic modeling soon expanded. "I tried runway and ever since then I have never looked back," she says. The confidence she found on the runway opened new doors and confirmed that she belonged in the industry.

Makeup artistry came just as naturally. "I have always loved it. It's just such a creative way to express oneself," Savannah explains. What began as self-practice slowly grew into something more serious. She later completed formal training at Kohl Academy, where she refined her technique and developed a professional foundation. "It started as a creative outlet, experimenting with different looks and techniques, and over time it grew into a real passion," she says. Savannah enjoys everything from glam to bold editorial and even special effects. "What's exciting is how each approach reflects a different story."

Acting entered her life during her school years. Savannah remembers nervously stepping onto the stage for a small role in a class play. "I discovered the thrill of embodying a character, the joy of connecting with an audience, and the sense of belonging that came from working with others to tell a story," she recalls. That early experience stayed with her and eventually led her to pursue formal acting training.

Finishing her acting studies last year marked an important chapter. "Studying acting formally has been a very different experience from simply doing it," Savannah explains.

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“Training means living inside scripts, exercises and improvisations for months, stripping away habits to rediscover authentic expression.” The process demanded discipline. Long rehearsals, voice work and movement classes pushed her to grow. “Acting school has pushed me to confront emotions I might otherwise avoid, turning vulnerability into a tool rather than a weakness,” she says. Being surrounded by equally passionate peers added fuel to her development. “Everyone pushes each other further.”

Completing her acting studies changed how she approaches modeling and makeup. “Acting training taught me to inhabit a character fully, not just pose,” Savannah says. Her modeling now carries deeper presence and intention. Makeup, too, became more than surface beauty. “Makeup has become about identity and transformation,” she explains. Emotion and purpose now guide her creative choices.

One of Savannah’s most treasured modeling memories took place at the Boksburg Photo Factory. What made the shoot unforgettable was not only the professional environment, but who stood behind the lens. “My mom was the photographer,” Savannah shares with a smile. “It was a blend of family support and professional growth.” She remembers the laughter, encouragement and pride they shared that day.

Savannah often combines her talents. “I did my makeup for my modeling portfolio shoot,” she says. She also uses acting techniques to refine her expressions during commercial work. These moments, where skills intersect, are especially meaningful to her.

Balancing three creative paths is not always easy. “Time management is of utmost importance and yes, sometimes it can be tricky to manage everything all at once,” Savannah admits. She relies on structure to stay grounded. “Time blocking my week helps. I assign specific days or hours for each task.” A diary and detailed to-do lists keep her focused and organised.

Confidence built in one field strengthens the others. “From acting, I’ve learned to access emotions authentically, which spills into modeling,” she explains. Modeling sharpens her awareness of angles and lighting, which influences how she designs makeup looks. “Makeup artistry reinforces the idea that appearance can shape identity,” she adds. Working with clients has also deepened her empathy and strengthened her connection with audiences.

Savannah draws inspiration from several industry figures. On the runway, she admires Coco Rocha for her generosity and dedication to mentoring new models. “She brings positive energy to the industry,” Savannah says. In makeup, she finds inspiration in creativity and practice, often watching the Netflix series Glow Up. In acting, she looks up to local talent Danica De La Rey Jones for her authenticity, and internationally to Anthony Hopkins for his transformative performances. “They have taught me the value of discipline, passion and versatility,” Savannah says.

One standout moment came during a beauty shoot where she designed every detail. “From the eye makeup to the lips, each detail complemented the model perfectly,” she explains. She even crafted a flowered hat to complete the look. Seeing the final images filled her with pride.

Looking ahead, Savannah sees her future as a blend of all three passions. “I see myself working both in front of and behind the camera,” she says. She hopes to secure magazine features and campaigns in modeling, build a signature brand in makeup artistry, and land acting roles that allow her to embody complex characters. She also dreams of mentoring others. “Multiple passions are not a weakness but a strength,” Savannah says firmly.

Reflecting on the past year, she recognises her growth. “At first, it felt like I was juggling separate identities,” she admits. “But they strengthen each other.” She has learned discipline, preparation and how to protect her creative energy. Her message to other young creatives is simple and honest. “If you are passionate about doing something, go ahead and do it,” Savannah says.

“It might seem scary at first, but that’s part of the journey. Keep showing up, not just to grow your career but to grow as an individual.”

Instagram: savannah_whiting_ savannah_makeup_artist

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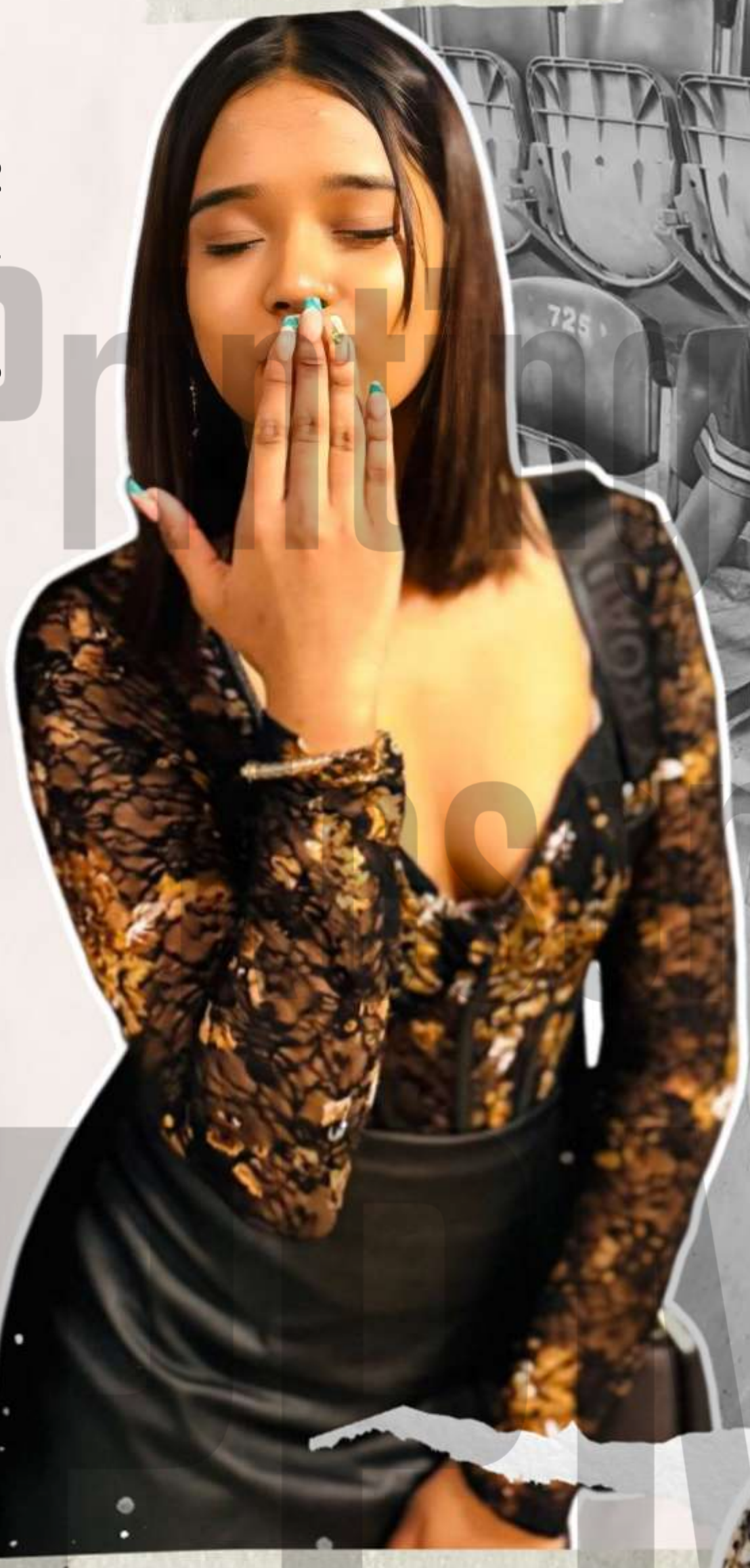
Instagram: @prettygurl_nikki_



Nikhira
Ariana
Subramoney

#Finalist

Nikhira Ariana Subramoney

Durban Model Search 2026 Finalist

Nikhira Ariana Subramoney is a 16-year-old from Phoenix, Durban, with a confident smile and a clear sense of direction. She describes herself as driven, creative, and passionate, and it shows the moment she starts talking about her love for dance and modeling. For Nikhira, self-expression is not just a hobby. It is part of who she is and how she connects with the world around her.

"I love expressing myself through dance and modeling," Nikhira says. "I'm always eager to learn and grow." That eagerness recently led her to an exciting milestone when she was selected as a finalist for Durban Model Search 2026. The moment she received the news is one she will not forget.

"I felt extremely excited and grateful," she says. "Being selected as a finalist was a proud moment for me and made all the hard work feel worth it. It motivated me even more to push myself and give my best."

Entering the competition was a deliberate step toward her future. Nikhira saw it as more than just a chance to be seen. She saw it as an opportunity to stretch herself and gain real experience in the industry she hopes to build a career in. "I entered Durban Model Search because I wanted to challenge myself, gain exposure, and grow within the modeling industry," she explains. "It felt like the perfect opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and work towards my future goals."

Nikhira's journey in modeling began at a young age when she joined Model Kids International. That early start helped her develop confidence and become comfortable in front of a camera and an audience. As the years went by, another passion grew alongside modeling. "Over the years, my passion for performance grew through dance," she says. "Now I'm combining both modeling and dance as I work towards building a career in the industry." So far, the competition has already left a strong impression on her. For Nikhira, the highlight has been the people she has met along the way. "The most exciting part has been meeting new people and being surrounded by so much talent and positivity," she says. "Every experience has helped me grow and believe more in myself."

That growth has not come without challenges. Like many young people chasing big dreams, Nikhira has had to learn how to balance different responsibilities. "Balancing school, dance training, and competition commitments has been challenging," she admits. "But it has taught me discipline, time management, and perseverance."

She believes the competition has helped her grow not only as a model but also as a person. "This competition has helped me become more confident in who I am," Nikhira says. "I've learned to trust myself, speak up, and believe in my abilities in both dance and modeling."

When she thinks about the future, Nikhira sees herself shining on the runway and in editorial shoots. "I see myself mostly in runway and editorial modeling, as I enjoy expressing emotion through movement and poses," she says. "However, I am open to exploring all areas of modeling." That open-minded attitude is something she carries into every opportunity.

Behind her stands a strong support system that keeps her grounded and motivated. "My biggest supporters have definitely been my family and close friends," she says with a smile. "Their encouragement and belief in me have pushed me to keep going, even when things felt hard or challenging." As she spends more time in the industry, Nikhira has discovered that modeling is about much more than appearance. "I was surprised by how much hard work and discipline goes into modeling," she says. "It's not just about looks. It's more about confidence, professionalism, and constant self-improvement."

Preparation is something she takes seriously. Before a casting, shoot, or runway walk, she follows a routine that helps her feel ready. "I prepare by practicing my walk, poses, and expressions," she explains. "I also make sure I'm mentally focused, well rested, and confident in myself before any big opportunity."

What helps her stand out, she believes, is her background in professional dance with Entertainment Spectacular. "It gives me strong body awareness, confidence, and stage presence," she says. "I also have a positive attitude and a strong desire to learn and grow."

If she were to win Durban Model Search 2026, Nikhira knows it would be a turning point. "Winning would mean a huge step forward in my career," she says. "It would open doors, give me valuable exposure, and help me turn my passion into a long-term profession."

Her biggest dream reaches far beyond local stages. "My biggest dream is to work internationally, walk major runways, and represent young people who come from humble beginnings," she says. "I want to show them that dreams are possible with hard work."

To other young people who feel nervous about entering competitions, Nikhira offers heartfelt advice. "Believe in yourself and don't let fear hold you back," she says. "Taking the risk can lead to amazing opportunities, and even trying is already a win.

Face the hardships and challenges along the way. They strengthen you and guide you toward what the future holds."

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Shaylize Gopal

Teen Model Finds Confidence, Purpose, and Voice

Instagram: @gnx_shay.shay
TikTok: @lowkeyy._.lizz
Agency: Roberta Alessandri

#Pageant

Interview with Shaylize Gopal

Supreme Queen of Heart of South Africa 2025

Former Hillcrest High School pupil and aspiring psychologist Shaylize Gopal is proving that a crown is far more than a symbol of beauty — it is a responsibility to serve, uplift, and inspire.

Shaylize, a model with Roberta Alessandri Models, was recently crowned Supreme Queen of Heart of South Africa 2025, a newly introduced title. She also received the Public Choice Award and was named Brand Ambassador at the Heart of South Africa Pageant, which took place on Saturday, 29 November 2025, at the Siva Sungam Hall in Stanger.

She expressed heartfelt gratitude to pageant director Sharon Harripersadh for the opportunity to be part of such a meaningful platform. “This pageant is not just about beauty,” Shaylize said. “It is a powerful platform that empowers women and inspires young people to become leaders and changemakers in their communities.”

Although Shaylize joined the pageant journey later in the year, starting at the end of August while balancing her trial and final matric examinations, she remained deeply committed to giving back. Under the guidance of the pageant director, finalists were encouraged to actively uplift their communities through hands-on initiatives.

One of the key projects was the Sandwich Squad Project, which aimed to support matriculants during exam time by providing nutritious meals to help them stay focused and healthy. As a recent matric learner herself, Shaylize understands the pressures of exams and the importance of proper nutrition. This inspired her to get involved and partner with a local radio station to carry out her charity drive.

“I know how stressful exam time can be,” she shared. “Having a proper meal before studying or writing can make a real difference, especially for learners who may not have access to food every day.”

Beyond this initiative, Shaylize’s community work extended across several causes. She donated food items to a children’s home, provided lunch for children at Operation Bobbi Bear during a visit in December, and contributed dog food to an animal shelter, reflecting her compassion for both children and animals.

She also purchased supplies to be included in care packs for abused women and children through the Jes Foord Foundation, supporting survivors of gender-based violence. In addition, Shaylize donated all her school uniforms, ensuring they could be reused by learners in need.

These acts of service strengthened her commitment to her main cause — ensuring that no child goes hungry. “Hunger doesn’t just take away a meal,” she explained. “It steals potential, confidence, and the opportunity for a better future. No child deserves that.”

Her current campaign focuses on empowering and feeding children, guided by her belief that every contribution, no matter how small, can change a child’s life. “We may not be able to change the whole world at once,” Shaylize said, “but we can change the world of a child — one meal, one donation, one act of kindness at a time.”

Her personal motto, “Believe you are enough,” reflects her message to young people everywhere — that they have the power to make a difference. Shaylize hopes to continue using pageantry and modelling as tools for positive change and plans to take part in more pageants to expand her charity work.

Looking ahead, she intends to study psychology, a field that aligns closely with her passion for youth empowerment, mental well-being, and community upliftment.

“I don’t just wear the crown — I carry the responsibility that comes with it,” she said. “The true value of the crown isn’t in how it looks, but in what you do with it.” Shaylize also expressed deep appreciation to everyone who supported her journey.

“Every like, share, vote, and word of encouragement meant the world to me,” she said. “To my family, thank you for standing by me every step of the way. Your love and support are the foundation of everything I have achieved.”

As she embarks on new community projects and future pageants, Shaylize remains committed to service, leadership, and hope. “My goal is to uplift my community and empower youth,” she said. “Together, we can build stronger, healthier communities — and ensure that no child is left hungry.”

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Megan Louw

At just 15, Megan is already learning what it means to chase a dream with focus and heart. The Mokopane teenager describes herself as "determined, kind-hearted, creative, and motivated," and it shows in the way she speaks about her journey. Megan is not just interested in modeling for the spotlight. She is drawn to the growth that comes with it. "I'm someone who always tries to give my best in everything I do," Megan says. "I believe strongly in growing as a person while following my dreams."

When Megan found out she had been selected as a Durban Model Search 2026 finalist, the moment felt almost unreal. "I felt extremely excited and grateful," she says with a bright smile. "It honestly felt unreal at first, and I was so proud of myself for stepping out of my comfort zone." For Megan, that phone call or message was more than just good news. "Being selected reminded me that hard work really does pay off, and it motivated me even more to keep pushing forward," she adds. Entering the competition was a personal decision rooted in courage. "I wanted to challenge myself and grow, not only as a model but also as a person," Megan explains. She saw Durban Model Search as more than a title.

"I saw it as an opportunity to gain experience, build confidence, and learn more about the industry. I also wanted to prove to myself that I'm capable of more than I sometimes believe."

Megan's modeling journey began at the end of 2024, and from the start, she felt she had found where she belongs. "From my very first pageant, Miss Diamond, I knew I had found my place," she says. Since then, she has made it a priority to show up and learn. "I've tried my hardest to attend every class and take part in every opportunity I can — pageants, runway, commercial, and editorial." Her dedication has already led to exciting milestones. Megan has been hand-picked for freeze modeling for Egerd and Forshine, completed her first modeling exam, and walked in a fashion show where she wore handmade wings as part of her look.

"At that same show, I also modeled clothing for Forshine," she says proudly. Beyond the outfits and stage lights, the personal growth has mattered most. "Modeling has taught me confidence not only on stage, but off stage too. It's helped me grow into myself and taught me how to carry myself as a young woman."

So far, the competition experience has been filled with highlights. "Meeting new people, learning new skills, and seeing how much I've grown already has been the most exciting part," Megan says. "Every step of the journey feels exciting, especially knowing I'm surrounded by others who share the same passion."

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#Finalist

Interview with Megan Louw

Durban Model Search 2026 Finalist

Still, the road has not been without challenges. “Believing in myself,” she admits honestly, when asked what has tested her the most. Megan has had to learn to quiet outside opinions and trust her own path. “I’ve learned that life is too short to worry about what everyone else thinks. If you want something, you must give it your all.” She leans on her mother’s words for strength. “My mom always says, ‘Do your very best, and God will do the rest,’ and that has helped me stay strong and focused.”

Through the competition, Megan says she has changed in important ways. “It’s helped me become braver and more confident in who I am,” she explains. “I’ve learned to speak up, stand tall, and trust myself.” She also speaks about inner values. “It’s taught me discipline, self-respect, and how important it is to stay positive even when things feel scary.”

Looking ahead, Megan sees herself shining on the runway and in pageants. “I personally see myself in pageant and runway modeling,” she says, adding with a calm smile, “but I believe God has His own plans for me, and I’m open to wherever this journey takes me.”

Behind Megan’s progress is a strong support system, especially one key mentor. “My modeling teacher has been my biggest supporter,” she says warmly. “She is always there for us, shows up to every class, and constantly inspires me to do my best. She is full of light and encouragement, and I’m truly grateful for her guidance.”

One of the biggest surprises for Megan has been the true nature of the modeling world. “I learned that it’s about so much more than looks and walking,” she says. “It’s about confidence, self-love, respect, and learning how to carry yourself.” She admits she once had the wrong idea. “Before modeling, I thought the industry was toxic because of what movies and TV shows showed me. But I’ve learned it’s actually filled with kind and caring people who support each other. Mistakes are okay — they’re part of learning.”

Before any big casting, shoot, or runway walk, Megan focuses on preparation and mindset. “I practice as much as I can using everything I’ve learned, pray for calmness, and remind myself to enjoy the moment,” she says. “I also focus on staying positive and confident.”

What makes Megan stand out, she believes, is not just her look but her mindset and background. “I’m homeschooled, which has taught me discipline and independence, and I bring a genuine heart to everything I do,” she says. “I’m hardworking, respectful, and always willing to learn. I don’t give up easily, and I truly appreciate every opportunity I receive.”

Winning Durban Model Search 2026 would be a major step for her future. “It would mean a huge step forward in building my career,” Megan says. “It would open doors, help me gain more experience, and allow me to grow even more in the modeling industry.”

Her biggest dream is clear and heartfelt. “My biggest dream is to enter a big pageant and win it — knowing that all the practice and hard work paid off and brought me to that moment,” she says.

For other young people who feel too nervous to enter competitions, Megan offers gentle encouragement. “Don’t let fear stop you,” she says. “Just enter and have fun. If you win, congratulations — and if you don’t, it’s still a learning experience. There is no downside to trying, because every opportunity helps you grow.”

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Brittany Uys

Mrs. Mpumalanga 2025 Ambassador

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#Finalist

Interview with Brittany Uys

Mrs. Mpumalanga 2025 Ambassador

Brittany Uys speaks about mental health, addiction, and women's empowerment with the honesty of someone who has lived through hard seasons and chosen to grow from them. At 33, Brittany is a hairstylist, a qualified English teacher, a wife, and a mother of four. Born and raised in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, she describes fitness and music as the things that "talk to my soul." But it is her role as Mrs. Mpumalanga Ambassador that has given her a larger platform to speak about issues close to her heart.

"Being crowned Mrs. Mpumalanga Ambassador means carrying a title with purpose, heart, and responsibility," Brittany says. "It represents my deep passion for people and my commitment to uplifting and serving the community in meaningful ways." She explains that the role allows her to build strong relationships with businesses and partner brands while standing for the values of the Mrs. Mpumalanga brand.

Her advocacy is deeply personal. "I firmly believe that every living person on this earth has fallen under the mental health umbrella at some point in their life," Brittany says. "Whether it be post-partum depression, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, or eating disorders." She chooses to focus on mental health, addiction awareness, and women's empowerment because, as she puts it, "When a woman is supported, healed, and empowered, she has the power to change not only her own life but the lives of those around her."

Brittany's own experiences shaped that passion. "Walking through difficult seasons myself has strengthened my empathy," she says. "It ignited a passion in me to advocate for women to be supported and reminded of their worth, so they don't have to face their struggles alone."

She believes many women suffer quietly under pressure to appear strong. "Society often measures our worth by how much we give, how well we hold everything together, and how quietly we carry the weight," she says. "That leaves women struggling in silence." She encourages women to release the guilt around caring for themselves. "Slow down. The rest can wait," Brittany says. "Be kind to yourself. Don't accommodate negative thoughts or negative behaviour. What you fill your mind with, you will become." She suggests simple, practical steps: "Make time for Bible study, self-care, exercise, and a hobby. Even a short walk outside, just breathing in fresh air and listening to birds, can make a difference."

For Brittany, reclaiming identity is also linked to independence and joy. "You have to do a little something that brings in a little income," she says. "Whether it's selling homemade candles, merchandise online, or working again. Do something empowering for yourself." She also encourages women to explore their personal style and interests on their own. "Take yourself on a little retail therapy outing. Discover your fashion sense, your makeup or perfume preferences. Take up a new hobby. Manifest life always."

Addiction, she says, must be handled with compassion. "Women can feel supported in recovery when we create spaces rooted in compassion rather than judgment," Brittany explains. "When their stories are met with understanding and dignity instead of shame, they can heal and rebuild their confidence." She stresses that asking for help is not weakness. "Seeking help is a strength, not a failure."

Her message to women who feel alone is simple but heartfelt. "We are never alone," she says. "Don't feel ashamed of your emotions. Don't ever give up when things get tough, because there is always somebody watching you and thinking just how amazing you are."

One of the most meaningful parts of her work has been seeing how many women are silently struggling. "I have met so many women along my path who I never knew were battling daily," Brittany says. "It opened my eyes to the true need out there." She measures impact not only in numbers but in conversations. "Seeing how many people support the cause and how openly they start talking about mental health and addiction shows me change is happening."

Certain partnerships have also stood out. Brittany speaks warmly about support from professionals in the recovery field, especially those who work closely with families facing addiction. She values the guidance of trained teams who understand the deeper layers behind these struggles and help families find their way forward.

Looking ahead, Brittany has clear goals. "I would like to start a women's empowerment platform focused on mental health and motherhood," she says. "A space where women can learn coping mechanisms, release emotions, and build friendships." Further down the line, she dreams of opening a halfway home. "A place that includes therapy, recovery support, job guidance, and confidence building," she explains.

Her final advice to women is direct. "Just do it. If you don't, you never will," Brittany says. She believes caring for yourself is not selfish but necessary. "Self-care and looking after your body is important. Make time for it."

Lanco Creations

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#Phata

Interview with Elandi van Vuuren

Owner of Lanco Creations Photography

Elandi did not plan on becoming a photographer. What started as curiosity slowly grew into something much deeper. Today, Elandi is the founder of Lanco Creations Photography, a brand built on connection, memory, and honest storytelling.

"My journey into photography started organically through curiosity, creativity, and a deep appreciation for meaningful moments," Elandi says. "What began as a personal interest slowly evolved into a purpose-driven passion rooted in storytelling and connection."

A big part of that growth came from friendship. Elandi credits fellow photographer Bianca Franz as someone who helped shape both skill and confidence behind the camera. "Bianca played a huge role in shaping my photography journey," Elandi explains. "She is an exceptional photographer and an incredible teacher. We spent countless hours going through her galleries, analysing images, discussing composition, and learning how a single photograph can tell an entire story. Those moments laid the foundation for my creative eye."

But it was a personal loss that changed everything. In 2023, Elandi's father passed away unexpectedly. That moment shifted the way Elandi saw photographs forever. "I realised how few photographs I had with my dad, and how fragile moments truly are," Elandi says. "Photography stopped being just an interest and became a calling — a way to preserve memories so others never experience that same regret."

That loss gave new meaning to every session. "Losing my dad taught me that photographs become priceless once moments are gone," Elandi says quietly. "It shifted my focus from simply creating beautiful images to intentionally capturing emotion, presence, and connection. Every session I photograph now is done with the understanding that these images may one day become someone's most treasured keepsake."

Soon after, another emotional moment marked the true beginning of Elandi's professional path. "That Christmas, shortly after my dad passed, my husband gifted me my very first Canon camera," Elandi shares. "It wasn't just a camera — it symbolised belief, support, and a new beginning. That gift marked the official start of my professional journey."

Through Lanco Creations Photography, Elandi has built a brand that focuses on real stories. "Lanco Creations Photography exists to capture real stories with honesty and heart," Elandi says. "My mission is to preserve authentic moments, while my vision is to create imagery that allows people to feel seen, understood, and remembered long after the moment has passed."

Elandi is drawn to sessions where emotion leads the way. "I love capturing genuine, emotional moments — families, couples, celebrations, and milestones where connection takes centre stage," Elandi says. "These are the moments that matter most, and the ones people return to years later."

Behind the scenes, there is both art and skill at work. "Technical knowledge gives me control, but emotion guides the image," Elandi explains. "Once I understand my settings instinctively, I can focus fully on my clients — their expressions, movements, and interactions — allowing the story to unfold naturally."

Elandi has also mastered long exposure photography, a technique that adds mood and depth. "Long exposure involves using a slower shutter speed to intentionally capture motion," Elandi says. "By lowering the shutter speed, I can create soft movement, flowing light, or intentional blur. This adds atmosphere and emotion, transforming an image into an experience rather than just a photograph." For Elandi, the most meaningful reward does not come from trophies or titles. "The most rewarding feedback is when clients tell me they felt truly seen and emotionally connected to their images," Elandi says. "Knowing that my work has meaning beyond how it looks is more valuable to me than any award."

Connection is always the first step before any photo is taken. "I prioritise connection before composition," Elandi explains. "I take time to understand my clients, create a comfortable environment, and allow them to be themselves. Authentic moments naturally follow when people feel safe and relaxed."

Like many creatives, Elandi has had to learn how to balance passion with business. "Balancing creativity with business structure has been one of my biggest challenges," Elandi admits. "I've overcome this by staying disciplined, continuously learning, and reminding myself why I started — to tell meaningful stories."

Elandi also has advice for new photographers. "Learn the technical side, but never forget the emotional one," Elandi says. "Be patient, stay curious, and photograph with intention. The most powerful images are created when you shoot with feeling, not ego."

Looking ahead, Elandi's goals remain grounded in heart and purpose. "My dream is to continue growing while staying true to my heart," Elandi says. "I want Lanco Creations Photography to be known for authentic storytelling and to leave a legacy of preserved memories for generations to come." For Elandi, photography is no longer just about images. It is about holding on to what matters most, one frame at a time.

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Limpopo Model Search 2026 Finalist

Mokgethwa Mokgethwa

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#Finalist

Introducing Molapo Mokgethwa

Limpopo Model Search 2026 Finalist

At 23, Molapo Mokgethwa is carving out a name in the fashion and modeling space with determination, creativity, and a deep belief in self-worth. Born and raised in Burgersfort, Limpopo, Molapo speaks with warmth and certainty about a journey that started with passion and grew into purpose.

"I love fashion, modeling, beauty pageants and everything that has to do with modeling," Molapo says with an easy smile. That love did not stop at wearing beautiful clothes. Molapo took it a step further and began designing them too. A self-taught fashion designer, Molapo creates original pieces that reflect personal style and bold self-expression.

For Molapo, modeling is about more than appearance. "I believe that the strongest action for a woman is to love herself, be herself, and shine amongst those who never thought she could," Molapo explains. That belief has shaped every step of the journey so far.

The excitement was real when Molapo was announced as a finalist in the Limpopo Model Search 2026. "I was so excited when I found out," Molapo says. "I told my family and friends the good news, and everyone was happy for me." Support from loved ones has been a constant source of strength. "I'm grateful to have a supportive family and friends. I really appreciate them."

Molapo also sees the platform as a chance to inspire others. "I want to keep my confidence and encourage the young generation to follow their dreams, to be confident, to try new things, and to see that everything is possible," Molapo says.

The road into modeling was not always smooth. "At first, it was tough. I didn't know much about modeling," Molapo admits. Instead of giving up, Molapo reached out for guidance. "I asked experienced models and coaches for help, and that was very helpful." Research became part of the routine. "Every time I wanted to learn something new, I did my research. That made it easier to understand when coaches explained things later."

There were disappointments too. "I failed in some pageants where I really wanted to take the crown home," Molapo says honestly. "I would feel discouraged, but I learned that it's about embracing yourself and enjoying the moment." That shift in mindset helped Molapo grow both on and off the stage.

Competing alongside other young models from Limpopo and Durban has been a highlight. "Being part of the Limpopo Model Search competition is one of the most exciting experiences for me," Molapo says. "I believe it comes with many opportunities."

One unexpected challenge was the public voting process. "Some people wanted to vote for me but didn't understand how it works," Molapo explains. "Some thought it was a scam, others asked me for help, and some just kept quiet about the problems they were facing." The result was fewer votes than expected, but Molapo chose to focus on the bigger picture.

"I am confident enough to say that I am willing to go as far as my career can take me," Molapo says. "I am ready to work with Limpopo Model Search. This can encourage other models from my town and other countries to dream big and not take their talents for granted."

Looking ahead, Molapo sees a future on many platforms. "I see myself in runway, commercial, pageant and editorial modeling," Molapo says. Behind the scenes, the support system remains strong. "My biggest supporters are my mom, my aunt, my grandma, my siblings and my friends." Molapo is also serious about preparation. "I practice my runway walk weeks before," Molapo explains. "I do research about the brand or agency and I maintain my body." For photo shoots, planning is just as detailed.

"I prepare outfits weeks before, research the brief, maintain clear skin and a clean hairstyle, and pack a bag with everything I might need, including makeup and a sewing kit." Castings are handled with the same care. "I make sure I have all my essentials days before and arrive 30 minutes early so I don't rush."

What makes Molapo stand out? "My unique physical features, my authentic personality, my professionalism, my confidence, and my creative skills," Molapo says without hesitation.

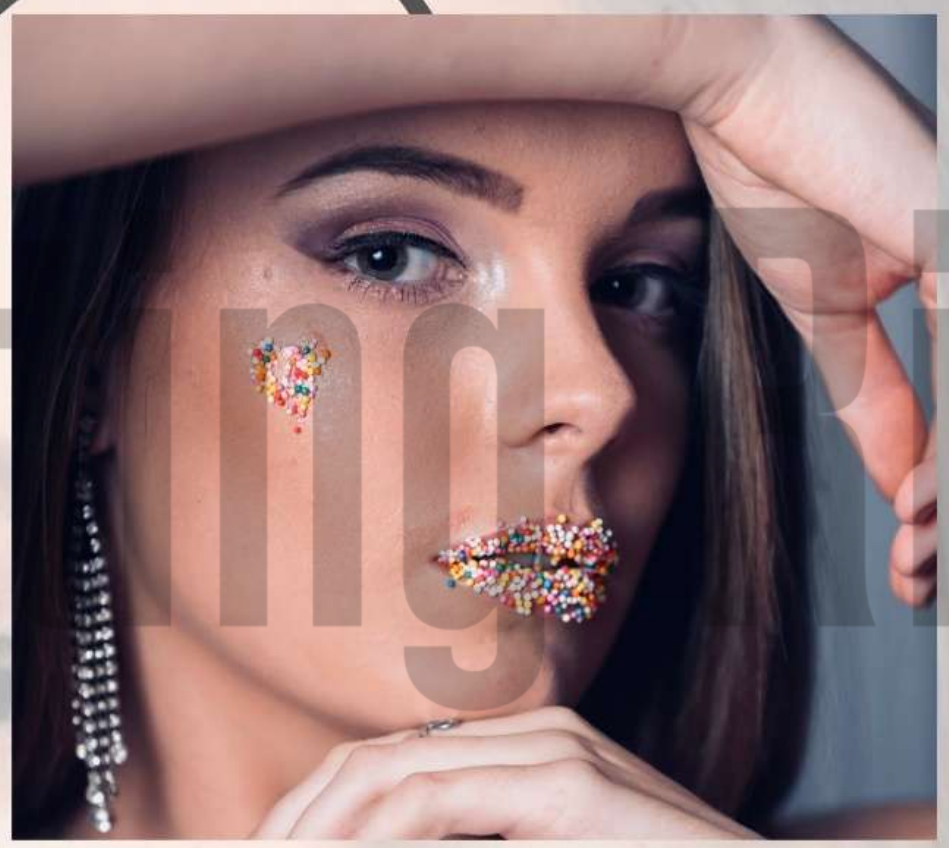
Winning Limpopo Model Search 2026 would be life-changing. "It would move my career from aspiring to professional," Molapo says. "It brings exposure, networking and career growth. I would be living my dream."

That dream goes beyond personal success. "My biggest dream is empowerment and self-expression for everyone," Molapo says. "I want to use modeling as a form of creative expression, build strong self-confidence, and create an authentic personal brand." One day, Molapo hopes to combine design and modeling. "I want to be a designer with modeling experience, showcasing my own brand and helping others grow in their careers."

For those just starting out, Molapo keeps the message simple. "This is a great opportunity to build self-confidence, gain experience and be noticed," Molapo says. And with the drive and heart Molapo brings to every step, that message carries real weight.

Reserved

LIENKE OBECKER



Fourteen-year-old Lienke from Mokopane is stepping confidently into the modeling spotlight as a Limpopo Model Search 2026 finalist, balancing school, sport, faith, and a growing passion for the runway

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#Finalist

Interview with Lienke Becker

Limpopo Model Search 2026 Finalist

Lienke, a 14-year-old from Mokopane in Limpopo, is making her mark in the modeling world as a finalist in the Limpopo Model Search 2026. Currently a student at Hoërskool Piet Potgieter, Lienke balances her schoolwork with hobbies like horse riding and playing hockey, but her passion for modeling is quickly taking center stage.

"The day I found out I was a finalist, I was on my way to hockey practice," Lienke recalls. "My mother said to me, 'Congrats, you are a finalist!' I jumped, screamed, and definitely had a few tears in my eyes. I knew it wasn't possible without my coach and the Lord's guidance."

Lienke entered the competition not to chase the title, but with a bigger goal in mind. "I didn't enter for the title," she explains. "I wanted to inspire younger girls and build my self-confidence." Her journey in modeling began in September last year, and although it hasn't been long, she says she has grown tremendously. "I practiced for hours just to perfect my turns," she says.

For Lienke, the most exciting part of the competition so far has been the experience itself. "It's fun for me to see all the people competing, and I know I can definitely learn something from each one of them," she says. But she admits the journey hasn't been without challenges. "The hardest thing for me is knowing I'm not always going to win. Sometimes losing makes you stronger," she adds.

Modeling has also given Lienke confidence that she never had before. "In my younger life, I would have never entered a competition or something like this," she says. "Modeling has really helped me build my confidence. I've learned so much, like how to do my own makeup, walk in high heels, and speak in front of people with confidence. I learned that God made me, and I am perfect in His eyes."

Lienke sees her future in both runway and pageant modeling but is open to exploring new opportunities. "I'm willing to participate and learn new things to be able to do everything," she says. Her biggest supporter throughout this journey is her mother. "She is there for every class and every photoshoot. She always goes the extra mile for me," Lienke shares.

One of the surprises Lienke has discovered about the modeling industry is the sense of camaraderie among contestants. "I was surprised to see that every girl supports each other and helps you when you need help," she says. Her preparation for shoots and castings is methodical.

"The night before, I usually do a face mask to relax my skin and pores. Then I go to sleep early. When I wake up, I read my Bible, eat nutritious fruit, and pack my bags so I'm not late. After that, we're off to our destination."

When asked what makes her stand out from the other finalists, Lienke is quick to answer. "My personality. I would do anything for anyone. I love animals, and I definitely study my Bible in the morning and at night," she says. She believes winning could open doors to more opportunities, including modeling for companies like Edgars.

"My biggest dream is to inspire other girls and to win Miss Limpopo," Lienke says with determination. She also has advice for younger girls who are too nervous to enter competitions. "It's okay to be nervous. Just do it. Being nervous already proves that you are trying. That is how we learn, grow, and become who God wants us to be. You are building your self-confidence and getting stronger by the second," she says.

With her focus, dedication, and strong faith, Lienke is not just chasing a crown—she's building a platform to inspire others. From the sports fields of Mokopane to the bright lights of the modeling stage, Lienke is proving that age is no barrier when passion and purpose come together.

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JANET ERXLEBEN

Miss Diva Mom 2026 Semi-finalist

Stepping into pageantry for the first time, Janet Erxleben enters Miss Diva Mom SA 2026 with a heart for service, a passion for empowering families and youth, and a clear mission to turn purpose into lasting impact.

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#Finalist

Interview with Janet Erxleben

Miss Diva Mom SA 2026 Finalist

Janet Erxleben is stepping into the pageant world for the very first time, and she is doing it with purpose. As a proud finalist for Miss Diva Mom SA 2026, Janet is not only a contestant, but also a devoted mother of three and a full-time IT Service Desk and Support Manager. Originally from Sasolburg in the Free State and now living in the East Rand of Johannesburg, Janet carries her small-town values with her into every space she enters.

"Everything I do is rooted in service, faith, and the desire to make a meaningful difference," Janet says. "I strongly believe that our current and past circumstances do not define our future." Her words are not just motivational phrases. They are principles she lives by.

Janet describes herself as "warm, compassionate, and driven, with a hint of spiciness." She laughs as she says it, but she is serious about the role she plays in the lives of others. "I am a natural encourager," she explains. "I believe in seeing potential where others may see limitations." She believes in leading by example and says empathy is one of her strongest qualities.

Her advocacy work focuses on empowerment, youth development, self-worth, confidence building, and mental wellness. Janet is especially passionate about creating safe spaces where young people can grow and feel supported. "Positive role models within families and communities are so important," she says. "We need to strengthen families if we want to strengthen society."

Much of Janet's work is hands-on. She is involved in community outreach initiatives, empowerment programmes, and charity-driven projects aimed at uplifting youth and families. One of her key campaigns supports young girls and boys from underprivileged families by helping them access formal wear for their matric farewell dances.

"This initiative helps remove the stress of financial barriers for the youth," Janet explains. "It also gives parents and guardians breathing space to focus on what truly matters, which is family and support during an important milestone." For Janet, it is about restoring dignity and creating joyful memories.

She also runs a toy drive that supports young children in orphanages and elderly residents in care homes. "Comfort has no age limit," she says. "Something as simple as a soft, cuddly toy can provide companionship, reassurance, and emotional comfort." Her belief is simple but powerful: small acts of kindness can make a lasting difference.

Looking ahead, Janet hopes to expand her initiatives and build strong partnerships. "I want to create sustainable platforms that offer mentorship, education, and hope on a broader scale," she says. Her vision goes beyond a title. She wants long-term impact.

When asked how she would like to be remembered as a titleholder, Janet answers without hesitation. "I would like to be remembered as someone who truly served with compassion, integrity, and impact. Someone who used her platform to uplift others and inspire change."

The issue of gender-based violence is one that is deeply personal to her. As a survivor, Janet speaks about it with honesty and courage. "One positive aspect of the movement is that it has opened important conversations and encouraged victims to speak up and seek help," she says.

"It reminds survivors that they are not alone." At the same time, she acknowledges a concern. "Awareness sometimes remains limited to online platforms without enough real-life action, education, and long-term support systems. True change requires supportive communities that stand together in meaningful ways."

Her greatest influence is close to home. "My children are my greatest influencers," Janet says. "Being a mother has shaped my purpose and motivates me daily to be a better version of myself." Motherhood has strengthened her and pushed her beyond limitations. Although her childhood was not perfect, Janet would not change her past. "Every challenge has taught me valuable lessons and shaped the person I am today," she says. "My journey has strengthened my compassion and understanding of others."

Janet believes her greatest contribution to the community is her consistent presence. "Presence carries power," she says. "Sometimes words and actions are not required. Someone just needs you to be close." Through mentoring, encouraging, and sharing her story of overcoming adversity, she hopes to show others that their past does not limit their future.

In her free time, Janet enjoys spending quality time with her family, being in nature, working on creative projects, and participating in community activities. "I find joy in the simple things that create lasting memories," she says.

The Miss Diva Mom journey has also taught her something new about herself. "I've learned that I am stronger and more capable than I sometimes believe," she admits. "This journey confirms that I am walking in my purpose."

As a first-time contestant, Janet offers simple advice to others thinking of entering a pageant. "If you want it, you need to take the first step," she says. "Growth begins outside your comfort zone. Be authentic, stay grounded, and remember that pageantry is about personal development, purpose, and the impact you can make, not just the crown."

For Janet, this is only the beginning. Through service, compassion, and steady leadership, she is building more than a pageant profile. She is building a legacy of hope.

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Frostiii

#Music

Introducing Kutlwano aka Frostiii

Versatile Young Artist On The Rise

Kutlwano Asenathi Senosi is an 18-year-old artist from Roodepoort, Johannesburg, who is steadily carving out his place in the music scene. Calm, focused, and deeply connected to his craft, Kutlwano describes himself as a hard worker and someone who simply loves art. That passion is clear in the way he speaks about his journey so far and the excitement he still carries for what lies ahead.

Releasing his debut single "Night and Day" marked a turning point. "Night and Day is the song that introduced me to Afrobeats and an audience that loves African music," Kutlwano says. "Seeing people respond to it made me nothing but delighted and shocked." For a young artist putting his sound out into the world for the first time, that reaction meant everything. The song opened doors to new listeners and helped him understand the power of connecting through rhythm and feeling.

The inspiration behind the track came from a softer, more emotional place. "Love and the beauty of romance inspired the vibe behind Night and Day," Kutlwano explains. That theme of emotion mixed with smooth, danceable production helped shape a sound that feels warm and relatable while still being fresh.

Kutlwano does not like to be boxed into one genre. "My music style is versatile, I don't shy away from other genres," he says. He moves comfortably between Afrobeats and dancehall, blending influences in a way that reflects both his taste and his mood at any given moment. This flexibility allows him to experiment and grow without limits.

While some songs show his melodic side, others highlight his lyrical ability. His track "Himothy" stands out for its more classic hip hop feel. "In my mind I was thinking of something old school like DMX style to pay tribute to that generation of hip hop," Kutlwano says. The song gave him space to tap into a grittier, more direct form of expression while still keeping his own voice at the center.

His stage name also carries meaning. "The name Frostiii, I came up with it and it represents how cool and chilled I am as an individual," Kutlwano explains with a smile. But that is not the only name he connects with. "Himothy is my alter ego and therosethatgrewfromconcrete is to showcase that I kind of had a rough upbringing without my grandma, since she passed." Through these names, Kutlwano shows different sides of himself — the confident performer, the thoughtful storyteller, and the young man shaped by personal loss.

When it comes to musical influences, Kutlwano draws from both local and international stars. "Drake, Nasty C, Lil Wayne and 2Pac influenced my sound the most," he says. From melody and flow to storytelling and attitude, each of these artists has left a mark on how he approaches his own music.

Kutlwano knew early on that music was more than just a hobby. "In grade 8 that's when I realised that I want to take music serious and not as a hobby," he says. Since then, he has been steadily building his skills and confidence, learning what it takes to stand out in a competitive industry.

His creative process usually begins with the production. "My creative process starts with a beat, then the mood then the lyrics," Kutlwano explains. The sound sets the emotional direction, and from there he finds the words that match the feeling.

Like many young artists, he has faced challenges along the way. "Biggest lesson I've learnt so far is people won't support you when you starting but as time goes they'll come around," he says. That lesson has helped him stay focused and not rely on early validation to keep going.

At the heart of it all, Kutlwano wants his music to uplift people. "I want listeners to feel inspired when they listen to my music, they should feel motivated," he says. His message is simple but powerful. "The story and message I'm trying to share is that art is imperfect, your imperfections as a person make you perfect."

One of his proudest moments so far has been recognition from artists he admires. "My favourite moment is when artists I grew up listening to like my sound on my stories or my reels on Instagram," Kutlwano shares. Those small gestures remind him that he is on the right path.

Looking ahead, Kutlwano has big plans. "Fans should expect more versatile music from Frostiii and epic collaborations," he says confidently. With his drive, openness to growth, and clear sense of identity, Kutlwano is an artist to watch as his journey continues to unfold.

Instagram: @frostiiimusic_
YouTube: @FrostiiiVEVO
TikTok: @frostiiimusic_

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Rekebogile Mokoana

INTENTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROOTED IN DIGNITY, PURPOSE, AND MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY IMPACT

#Finalist

Introducing Relebogile Mokoana

Miss Inspire South Africa 2026 Finalist

Relebogile Mokoana speaks with calm certainty about the path she is walking. For Relebogile, inspiration is not about perfection or applause. It is about intention. “Inspiration does not come from being perfect, it comes from being intentional,” Relebogile says with quiet confidence. Hailing from Benoni in Gauteng, Relebogile believes every opportunity in her life has come from choosing growth, even when staying comfortable would have been easier.

Her journey into Miss Inspire South Africa is not about changing who she is. Instead, Relebogile describes it as a bold statement of identity. “This is not a transformation story,” Relebogile explains. “It is a declaration of who I already am and who I am becoming.” She sees the platform as a natural extension of her values rather than a sudden turning point.

For Relebogile, Miss Inspire SA stands for alignment. It reflects the kind of woman she works to be every day. “It represents a woman who leads with purpose, who understands that visibility carries responsibility, and who knows that influence should always serve something greater than self,” Relebogile says. She is clear that admiration was never the goal. “I did not enter this space to be admired. I entered it to stand for something.” That “something” is rooted in dignity, self-worth, and rising above difficult circumstances. Relebogile’s passion for advocacy is deeply personal and shaped by her own experiences. During her school years, she faced ongoing bullying that affected her confidence and sense of identity. Instead of letting those experiences define her in a negative way, Relebogile chose to use them as fuel for growth. “Those moments forced me to confront my worth early on,” Relebogile says. “Instead of allowing them to silence me, I chose to turn that pain into purpose.”

Today, she speaks openly about self-esteem and emotional strength, especially when engaging with young people. Relebogile understands how deeply these struggles can shape a child’s future. “I know what it feels like to question your value,” Relebogile shares. “That is why I speak about these issues honestly. Young people need to know they are not alone, and that their voices matter.”

Her commitment to living with intention led to the creation of her Dignity Drive initiative. Through this project, Relebogile works to restore confidence and dignity in schools and communities, particularly among young women who often feel unseen. “I chose inspiration not as a title, but as a way of living,” Relebogile says. “Service is a natural extension of that choice.” Partnering with the Department of Basic Education was a meaningful milestone for her. “That partnership confirmed my belief that real impact happens when leadership and collaboration come together,” Relebogile explains.

Relebogile believes service should never be about appearances. “For me, service is not performative, it is personal,” she says firmly. This belief also shaped a recent event she hosted at Kids Haven, an organisation that supports children in vulnerable circumstances. The celebration was designed to create joy and connection. “I wanted the children to feel seen and celebrated,” Relebogile says. “Advocacy must also include moments of happiness and affirmation.” Watching the children laugh and engage reminded her why she does this work. “Dignity is not only about addressing hardship,” Relebogile adds. “It is also about creating safe spaces where children feel valued.”

While pageantry and community work are important parts of her life, Relebogile’s foundation is built on education and discipline. She holds a Diploma in Systems Development, an Advanced Diploma in Business Analysis, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Information Technology Management. Her academic background plays a major role in how she approaches her projects. “My studies taught me to think strategically and plan for long-term impact,” Relebogile says. “I bring structure and intention into everything I do.”

In her professional life, Relebogile describes herself as analytical, detail-oriented, and guided by integrity. She values accountability and consistency, and she thrives in spaces that require both emotional awareness and technical skill. These qualities shape how she carries herself as a Miss Inspire SA finalist. “I show up prepared, purposeful, and fully aware of the responsibility that comes with visibility,” Relebogile says.

Wearing the Miss Inspire sash means more than representing a competition. For Relebogile, it symbolises a wider shift in how leadership is defined. “I represent a generation of young women who are redefining leadership beyond aesthetics,” Relebogile says. She believes it is possible to be both ambitious and focused on healing. “Influence is most powerful when it is rooted in action,” she adds.

Relebogile is clear that Miss Inspire SA is not the final goal. “This is not the destination,” Relebogile says. “It is a platform that amplifies the work I am already committed to and the values I live by.” Through advocacy, education, and service, Relebogile continues to choose inspiration every day, not for recognition, but for meaningful impact.

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